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EMMANUEL



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THE
SPIRIT
OF
HEBREW POETRY,

BY J. G. HERDER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

BY JAMES MARSH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BURLINGTON:

EDWARD SMITH,
(Successor to Chauncey Goodrich.)

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The work, of which a translation is here offered to the publick, has long been celebrated in Germany, as one of distinguished merit. On its first publication it did much to awaken and cherish the taste for Oriental and especially Hebrew antiquity, which has since so extensively prevailed among the scholars of that country. It taught them, too, in the study of Hebrew antiquity and Hebrew poetry, as the works of Lessing, Winkelmann, and others had done in regard to Grecian antiquity, to divest themselves of the conceptions, and modes of thought, which are peculiar to their own country and institutions, and of the peculiar spirit of their own age ; by the force of imagination to place themselves in the condition of those ancient patriarchs and prophets, whose thoughts and feelings they seek to apprehend ; to see the world as they saw it, to feel as they felt, to imbibe and to express their spirit in its truth and simplicity. Hence, though Germany has since been fruitful in works connected with Hebrew poetry and history, and though the great work of Bp. Lowth has been translated and is appreciated there, this still retains its place, as a classical and standard work.

These general facts might seem sufficient, in the view even of those, who are not personally acquainted with the work, to claim for it a place in the biblical literature of this country, and the few among us, who are acquainted with it, have long wished for a translation, which should render it accessible especially to all who are professionally engaged in biblical studies. The same influence, it is believed moreover, is needed here, and indeed among English scholars generally, which, as above remarked, it exerted, in concert with other works, in the country which produced it. The work of Bp. Lowth is the only one of much distinction, whose influence is felt either in England or in this country, in cultivating in the minds of students a genial love for the spirit of Hebrew antiquity. What that is, as compared with the work of Herder, is readily seen by any one, who is acquainted with both, and capable of appreciating the difference between them. Valuable, and indeed indispensable as it is, to the student of the Bible, from the richness of its thoughts and the nice discrimination exhibited in its learned criticism, it differs essentially from that of Herder in the point of view, from which it contemplates the subject of which it treats. It seeks to illustrate and make intelligible the beauties and sublimities of Hebrew poetry, by comparing it in all its varieties, with the productions of Grecian and Roman art, and has done perhaps all that can be desired in following out that mode of critical comparison. It exhibits the views, which must naturally be taken, and are therefore justly taken, by a mind thoroughly disciplined and cultivated by a study of what in English literature is exclusively understood by classical learning both ancient and modern.

But in one sense it may be justly said, that the more thoroughly one's understanding is moulded by the forms, and occupied with the conceptions exhibited in the literature of one age and country, the less is it qualified to imbibe the genuine spirit, and feel the simple power of every other national literature. This must necessarily be the case, if it be so pre-occupied and biassed as to judge of all others, and test their merits, exclusively by the result of comparison with that, from which its own character was derived. Unless it have the higher power of divesting itself of all that is peculiar in its acquired forms of thought, and in those conceptions by which it takes cognizance of the objects of its knowledge, of clothing itself anew in the forms of thought peculiar to another people, and of so adopting their conceptions for its own, as to contemplate the world around them under the same relations with them, the man can never participate in their emotions, nor breathe the spirit of their poetry. He must not only be acquainted with the facts of their history, the modes of life, and the circumstances of every kind, by which their habits of thought and feeling were moulded, as a mass of antiquarian lore, but must learn to place himself entirely in their *point of view*, and to see all these particulars in the relation to each other, and to the observer, which they would then assume. When he has done this, he will be prepared to understand why they thought, and felt, and wrote as they did ; and if he have the feeling and inspiration of the poet, he will sympathize with their emotions, and the living spirit of their poetry will be kindled up in his own imagination. How difficult it is for us to do this, however, in relation to the poetry

of a people so widely diverse from us in all the circumstances of their earthly existence, can be understood only by those who have looked at the subject with enlarged and philosophical views. Thus to enter into the spirit of Grecian poetry, to understand the child-like simplicity of Homer, and appreciate the truth of feeling in his representations, is a high attainment for the classical student, yet the Greeks were our neighbours and kindred, when compared with the more ancient and Oriental Hebrews. When we place ourselves in the tents of the Hebrew patriarchs, on the plains of Arabia, or the mountains of Palestine, every thing is to be learned anew. The language, the habits of life, the modes of thought and of intercourse, the heavens above, and the earth beneath, all are changed, and present to us a strange and foreign aspect. When in addition to this we consider, that the poetry, which we are here called to study, belongs to the earliest periods of recorded time, and embodies many of the first simple and child-like conceptions of the human mind, and when we reflect, too, how difficult it is for us to return upon our own childhood, and revive the faded conceptions and forgotten feelings, with which we then looked abroad upon the works of nature, observed the conduct of our fellow-men, or contemplated our own being and destiny, we may apprehend something of the difficulties, which an author has to overcome, who would fully enter into the spirit of Hebrew poetry, and make it intelligible to a mere English reader. We may understand too how impossible it would be by the method, which Lowth has pursued, and by that alone, to do full justice to a body of poetry so peculiar, and so diverse

in its whole spirit, from that with which he brings it into comparison. Hence the necessity of the work of Herder; and the end, which he sought to accomplish, was to supply that, which was wanting in the celebrated lectures of Bp. Lowth. He has aimed by tracing the simple and child-like conceptions, which had been transmitted from the infancy of the race, and which had a predominant influence, in connexion with the outward circumstances of their existence, in giving its character and spirit to their poetry, in a word, by looking at these in their causes, to place us in the proper point of view, and enable us to feel and appreciate them for ourselves. But what farther is necessary to be said on this point the author has himself said in the plan of his work, in his preface, and in various parts of the work itself.

How far the author has succeeded in regard to the attainment of his end, the reader, with proper qualifications for forming an opinion, must judge for himself. That he has always apprehended in their true sense the early conceptions of the Hebrews is not to be supposed, nor would any one probably undertake to defend all his views, even of important matters, connected with the early traditions of the race. The biblical representations of Paradise, of the garden of Eden, of the temptation and fall of Adam, of the Cherubim, of the deluge, and of what Herder denominates mythological representations generally, have ever furnished an ample field of speculation, in which every critick feels at liberty to form his own opinions, and for the most part to interpret by his own rules. So far as philosophical and theological considerations influenced the author, he seems to have aimed chiefly at

meeting the popular objections to the representations of Scripture, which were then very generally prevalent, and are so more or less in every age, by showing, that, although we cannot understand these, as they would at first seem to mean, when seen from our point of view, they yet exhibit when seen from the right position, and in their true relations to the age and people, for which they were originally made, a sense both natural and rational. To judge fairly of the author, as a man of piety and of sober and correct views, from the representations, which he has given of these matters, we must consider moreover the atmosphere, in which he wrote, and the free spirit of Biblical criticism, as exhibited at the same time by Eichhorn and other contemporary German writers. But after making due allowances of this sort, it will still be felt, that the work contains some things irreconcilable with just views, nor would I be understood as subscribing to all the sentiments, which I am herewith exhibiting to the publick.

If it be asked, why then do I exhibit opinions, which I deem erroneous, I can only say, that others, as well as myself, and those in whose judgment I place the highest confidence, have thought it extremely desirable, all things considered, that the work should be given to the publick, and my views of duty to my author, as a faithful translator, did not permit me to misrepresent his opinions in any thing of importance.* I was at

*I fear that in one or two instances, the translation, through inadvertence, is such as may seem to convey a sense farther removed from what are considered correct views, than the original. An instance of this occurs on page 189, where "Hell" properly means the place of the dead. It is explained by reference to page 176.

first disposed to avoid the difficulty by accompanying the work with notes, and giving in them my own remarks, on whatever would probably be considered objectionable by the lovers of divine truth. I soon found, however, on considering the nature of the subjects that would require to be noticed in this way, that I must either give a naked opinion, where a sense of propriety would not permit me to do so, or enter into discussions of a philosophical and theological kind, unsuited to the character, and beyond the proper limits of the work. My belief is, moreover, that such is the character and spirit of the work, taken as a whole, as to give it an influence highly beneficial to the cause of truth and of sound Biblical learning among us, if only it be read in the spirit that dictated it, and to correct in the general result, whatever individual errors of opinion it may contain. It is only to be regretted, that the author had not completed the plan which he had sketched, and we could then, no doubt, have judged more fairly, of the proportions and bearings of the parts which we have.

What, and how comprehensive his plan was, will be seen from his own sketch of it, immediately following this preface. It seems, too, to have been his favourite enterprize, and cherished with fondness, as he remarked to one of his friends, from his very childhood. His hopes, however, were never fully realized, and only a part of the general plan was ever executed. During the latter part of his life, when he had hoped for leisure to accomplish it, he was so much oppressed with other duties, as at last to be removed in the midst of his labours, when he had scarcely entered upon the third division of his work.

Even the two first divisions still required some important additions and corrections from the author's hand. The work however was published by him, and nearly in its present form, at Dessau, in 1782 and 1783. After his death, which took place in 1803, a second edition with such additions, as could be made from the papers, which he had left, was published by his friend J. G. Mueller of Schaffhausen, in 1805 and 1806. The third edition, with some small contributions of his own, was published in 1822 by Prof. Justi, of Marburg, in two vols. 8vo. This is esteemed the best edition, and from it the present translation has been made.

Of my own undertaking as translator I have no disposition to say any thing further, except that I have been very well aware of its difficulty, and have aimed to perform it with all reasonable exactness and fidelity to the original. As a work of taste, it requires more care and labour than would be necessary, where less regard was had to elegance of composition, and I have aimed, as far as I was able, to give a fair expression of the original. The numerous translations from the Hebrew, and other poetical effusions especially, I have endeavoured to exhibit with as much accuracy as could well be attained in a matter of so much difficulty. These were regarded by the author, as the chief object of his work, and his translations from the Hebrew were made with peculiar care. He aimed to preserve and exhibit, as far as possible, not the thoughts merely, but their form and colouring, and the precise tones of feeling which were associated with them in the minds of the authors, and of those for whom they were originally written. In this he has succeeded, undoubtedly, far better than Lowth, whose poetical paraphrases

serve only to convert the simplicity of the Hebrew into the more artificial forms of expression, which belong to the classick poetry of more modern times. It was a matter of course, therefore, in giving a translation of Herder, to consider this as the part of his work, which he would most value himself, and to preserve, as far as possible, his peculiar views of the sentiment of the original Hebrew. Yet, in so regarding it, I have thought it necessary also to have reference to the language of the English translation, and have always preferred it, where it could be done without misrepresenting the sense of Herder. Regard to this has led me also to be less careful of metrical arrangement, than I should otherwise have been. Herder has for the most part, though not uniformly, adhered to the Iambic measure, though with little regard to the length of the lines. When this could not be done without giving the translation a more artificial colouring than suits our notions of simplicity in such things, I have in most cases merely preserved the parallelisms, and aimed only at the most simple rhythm. In translating other poetical effusions, than those from the Hebrew, a few of which the author has inserted in the work, I have merely followed the form of the original. My aim has been in all things of importance, to give a faithful representation of the author's work in regard both to matter and form. I could not learn till quite recently, that a version of any portion of the work had been previously made either in England or this country ; but within a few days have received a copy of a work under the title of "Oriental Dialogues," which is a translation of a part of the first volume of this work. Several of the dialogues are omitted, and

the order of the remainder changed by the translator, so that it can hardly be considered a satisfactory account of the original, and, had I known of its existence, would not have saved me the labour which I have bestowed upon the work.

The first volume, which is now ready for publication, it will be observed by comparison with the plan of the work, contains only the introduction and a brief account of the life and character of Moses. The other volume, containing the first and second parts of the work itself, will be prepared for publication, as soon as the pressure of other duties will permit. That it may do something to promote a genuine taste for ancient learning, and the simplicity of primitive antiquity generally, and more especially love for those inspired records of Hebrew antiquity, which have so many and so peculiar claims upon the regard of every student, is the sincere wish of the

TRANSLATOR.

PLAN OF THE WORK.

The beautiful and justly celebrated work of Bp. Lowth, *de sacra poesi Hebraeorum*, is universally known, and might seem to preclude the necessity of the present undertaking. A nearer comparison of its contents, however, will show, that the present work is neither a translation, nor an imitation of it. Whether the sphere, which it occupies, be of equal or inferior importance, it is at least sufficiently distinct, and cannot be without its interest and use to the lovers of the most ancient, simple, and sublime poetry in general, nor indeed to all, who cherish a liberal curiosity respecting the progress of knowledge, divine, and human, as connected with the earlier history of our race.

In a prolonged *introduction* are investigated three *principal particulars*, from which in its origin the character of the poetry of the Hebrews was derived. In the first place, are exhibited the poetical characteristics of their *language* in its structure and copiousness; then the *primitive conceptions*, which they had received as a legacy from the most ancient times, and which constitute, as it were, a *cosmology* as sublime as it is poetical; and third, the *history of their patriarchs* down to their great law-giver, and whatever in it was fitted to *distinguish*, as well the *whole nation* generally, as more particularly their writings and the *spirit of their poetry*.

The work itself properly commences with Moses, the *law-giver* of the nation ; and proceeds to show what influence he exerted, or failed to exert, on the spirit of the people, and of their posterity, by his *deeds*, by his *legislation*, and by the *exhibition* of both in his *history* and in his own *poetical* effusions. It points out what conceptions, transmitted from more ancient times, he adopted and practically applied, and what he altered in this legacy of the patriarchs ; what view of their promised land, and of the nations around them, he aimed to impress upon their minds ; and finally, by what means he formed the poetry of the nation, gave it its *pastoral* and *rural* character, and consecrated it to the uses of the *sanctuary* and of the *prophets* of Jehovah. The *causes* by which these effects were brought about are unfolded out of the history of the race, and their *influence* exhibited in the most striking examples of later times.

In the next place, the history itself is carried forward from *Moses* to the period of the highest national prosperity, and of the most powerful *king*, under whom and his son occurred the *second* marked development of national poetry. The most beautiful specimens of it, produced during this period, are explained from the *causes*, which gave rise to them, are placed in that true *Oriental light*, which is necessary to a perception of their beauties, and the effects produced by them in after times unfolded. It is implied of course, that some of the most interesting and instructive of these specimens are inserted in the work, in a *translation* both intelligible, and capable of exhibiting something of their true spirit.

The work then passes to the *third* period of the art,

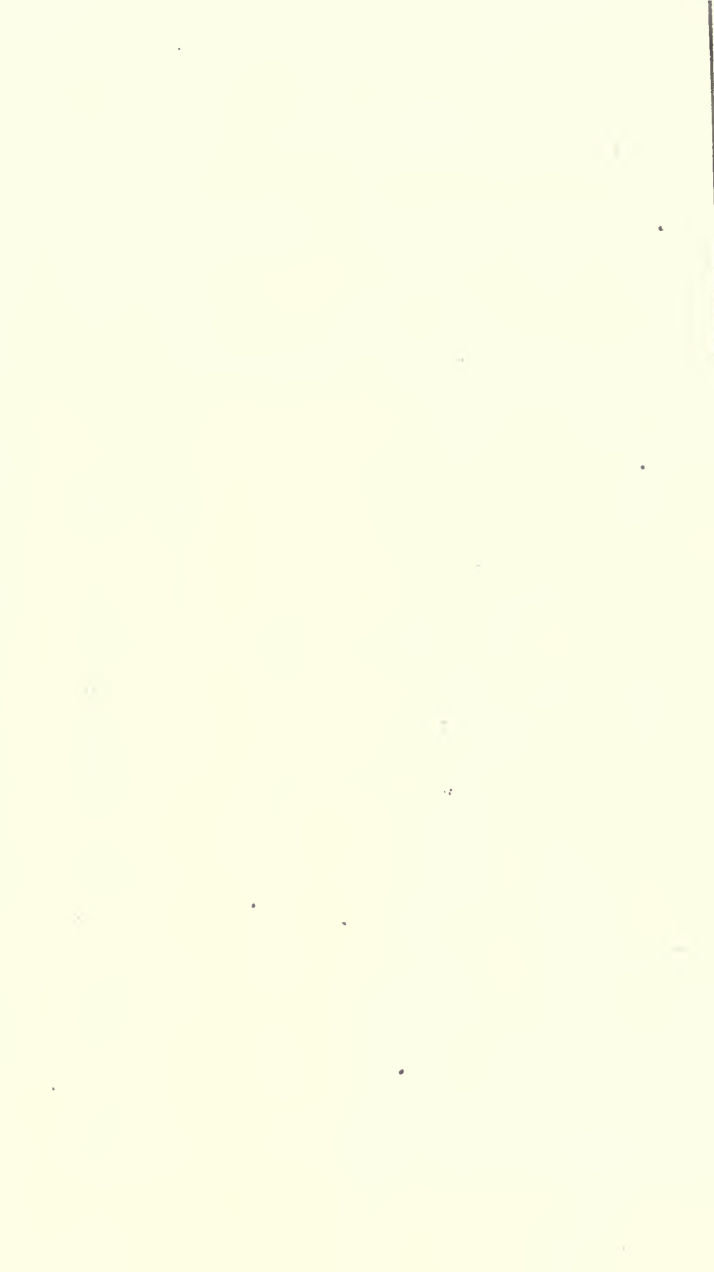
as it existed among this people long before their downfall,—to the voice of the *prophets*. The *characters* of these patriotick and divinely prompted leaders of the people are unfolded, an *introduction* given to their writings, and some of their most touching, beautiful, and sublime passages here and there embodied in the work.

Next come the sorrowful tones of lamentation, which accompanied and followed the *downfall of the nation*; and those which breathed hope and admonition in regard to its *re-establishment*; the effects produced by the writings of this people, when collected together, and made known in other languages, especially the Greek, and their influence through the writings and teachers of *christianity* down to our own times.

A few chapters at the end of the work investigate the history of the mode, in which this poetry has been regarded and treated by the Jews and other nations; the different success, with which it has been imitated at different times, and in different languages, and finally, what may have been the result of these writings and of their spirit in the whole history of cultivation, and of revolutions in the world, so far as known to us.

This annunciation, it is hoped, will be received not as ambitious pretension and high-sounding phrase, but simply as the purpose, which the author of the work has ventured to form and place before him. In magnis voluisse sat est, is here his chosen motto.

THE AUTHOR.



THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The foregoing annunciation of the plan of the work, supersedes the necessity of dwelling at large upon it in this place. I shall, therefore, only state briefly how it is carried out in this first part.

The general purpose of the work, required that this part should embrace the general and characteristick traits of Hebrew poetry, which mark its essential outlines, its cosmology, the most ancient conceptions of God, of Providence, of Angels, of the Elohim, and of the Cherubim, and individual objects, and poetical representations of nature. With these, it must contain also, especially, the traditions of the patriarchs, which, as among all nations, so peculiarly among this people, were the source from which were derived all the peculiarities of their modes of thinking, consequently also the genius of their poetry. To set forth these, and unfold them correctly, was here so much the more necessary, since most traditions of this kind have themselves more or less of poetical colouring, and what is worse, are often greatly misapprehended. In doing this, I have aimed as much as possible at brevity, have endeavoured not unnecessarily to say for the hundredth time, what had been repeated ninety-nine times already, and where on account of the connexion I was obliged to do so, have passed over it as briefly

as possible ; for where in common-place matters we cannot read with interest, we can much less write with it.

I sought, therefore, rather to set in their true light, the obscure and misinterpreted histories of Paradise, of the fall, of the tower of Babel, of the wrestling with the Elohim, &c., together with particular mythological representations, and personifications, which show most clearly the character of Hebrew poetry, and will at the same time prove of the greatest service to us hereafter ; for before one can say much, either of the beauty or deformity of an object, he must first learn to understand it. A right understanding of words, of figurative language, and of things, will give, without long discourses and a tedious explication of it, the conception of beauty to one who has the capability of emotion. To one who is destitute of this, it can hardly be communicated by exclamations, and repetitions of similar passages from other poets, and much less by abstract discussions respecting the nature of poetry, and its various kinds. From all this, therefore, the present work will be free.

If I have occupied as much as I could of the work with the translation of select passages, no one, I hope, will think it too much, for these are in fact, the very purpose and subject of the work. They are the stars in an otherwise empty space. They are the fruit, and my book is only the shell. Could I have succeeded fairly in setting forth the specimens which I have here given, in all their ancient dignity and simplicity, I should not, at the least, have failed altogether of my aim ; for in regard to this, I am of Luther's opinion, " that we must let the Prophets sit as teachers, and at

their feet listen with humility to what they say, and not say what they must hear," as if we were their teachers. In this early period, the Book of Job was especially appropriate to my purpose, and I only wish that I may have expressed something of that which my own soul felt in the study of this sublime, simple, and perhaps most ancient of all regular compositions. *Ardua res est, vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem, obsoletis nitorem, obscuris lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubiis fidem, omnibus vero naturam et naturæ suæ omnia.* Something of this I would have attained, in what I have said of the patriarchs, of Job, and of Moses. With mere learning and the characters of a foreign language, I could not consent to burden my pages. To the unlearned they are of no use, and the scholar who has the original language and the ancient translations at hand, can easily accommodate himself with them; for him indeed, especially for the young scholar, it is a source of pleasure to supply for himself the grounds of the opinions which he is taught, and to have something left for him to search out, to compare, and weigh by his own reflections. Hence, I have availed myself of the rich helps of more recent philologists, where I could do so, without making a display of it, or seeking credit by disputing them. To those whose aid I have experienced, my silent use of it will be my thank-offering; and where I could not adopt their opinion, there—I had my own opinion.

And in order to advance this always in the mildest terms, and in the clearest light, I have chosen the form of dialogue, though unusual, I am aware, in subjects of this sort. How difficult it was for me, too, I know very well, and to have aspired to rival the graces

of the dialogues of Plato, of Lord Shaftsbury, of Diderot, and of Lessing, would have been, in treating such matters, and with such aims, the extreme of folly. Here was no opportunity for devising interesting situations, nor for unfolding new characters, nor finally for artfully drawing out thoughts from the mind of the respondent, in which the greatest art especially of didaectick dialogue consists. The aim here was not to invent in general, but to elucidate, to exhibit, and point out to view, to find what is already before us. The only speakers admissible, therefore, are the demonstrator, and he to whom he demonstrates, friend with friend, teacher and scholar. My pattern for the general plan of the dialogue was not Plato, but the book of Corsi, or indeed the catechism.

But why then did I choose the form of dialogue? From more than one cause. First, and more especially for the sake of brevity. In the dialogue a single letter, the index of a new train of thought, a brief *how?* or *whence?* expresses what in the systematick form would require periods or half pages. Thus I am spared such tedious forms of expression, and such transitions as "it may be said on the other hand" &c. In the second place, I might in this way be able to escape the uniform, peremptory, or controversial tone, of the professorial chair or of the pulpit, which otherwise could scarcely be avoided throughout the work, on a subject of this sort. A dialogue, even in the worst style, gives to the subject animation, variety, and human interest, if only it do not (as was often the case here,) treat of matters that are too dry, and continue too long. In the third place, I escaped, for which I am heartily thankful, the necessity of contra-

diction, of strife, and of numberless citations, and thus avoided a very serious evil. In the form which I have adopted, the speakers are Alciphron and Euthyphron. The former speaks very much such sentiments as are uttered by the publick with its hundred heads, but they speak to one another alone, teach and controvert nobody in the world besides themselves. Whoever does not agree with Euthyphron, may retain the opinion of Alciphron, or—have his own opinion. Finally, I venture to confess, that the older I become, the more difficult for me is the tone of an instructor. Whom does one teach, moreover, when he teaches the publick as a mass? Where does this publick dwell? and in what style should we address it, that we may neither assume too lofty nor sink to too humble a tone? Here two individuals speak, and whoever will, may listen, improve what they say, and be either learner or teacher.

Let me venture to say, however, whom I would most gladly choose for readers of this work. Alciphron is a youth; he studies this poetry not from compulsion, not from the necessity of his profession, or of bread, but from a love of it. Young men then like him, and lovers of Scripture, lovers of the most ancient, the most simple, perhaps of the most truly heart-felt poetry in the world; lovers, in a word of the most ancient records of the human mind and heart,—unbiased, fresh, and ardent men of the same character, I would choose before all others for my readers. Of the childhood and youth of the human race, we can best speak with children and youth. The times antecedent to the Mosaick bond-service those feel with most congeniality whom the yoke of rules has never oppres-

sed, and in whom the dawn of the world harmonizes with the dawning of their own souls. If my book contains any thing of worth, he is my best friend, who without either praise or censure procures for it readers of this description. Each one can always omit, what does not suit his taste, and for this purpose the contents of the dialogues are prefixed to them.

And if, as I could wish, there be among these youth, those engaged in the study of theology, I venture to say a word more particularly to them. The basis of theology is the Bible, and that of the New Testament is the Old. It is impossible to understand the former aright without a previous understanding of the latter ; for Christianity proceeded from Judaism, and the genius of the language is in both books the same. And this genius of the language we can no where study better, that is, with more truth, depth, comprehensiveness, and satisfaction, than in its poetry, and indeed, as far as possible, in its most ancient poetry. It produces a false impression and misleads the young theologian to commend to him the New Testament to the exclusion of the Old. Without this, that can never be understood in a scholar-like and satisfactory manner. In the Old Testament we find as an aid to this, a rich interchange of history, of figurative representation, of characters, and of scenery ; and we see in it the many coloured dawn, the beautiful going forth of the sun in his milder radiance. In the New Testament it stands in the highest heavens, and in meridian splendour, and every one knows which period of the day to the natural eye of sense imparts most life and strength. Let the scholar then study the Old Testament, even if it be only as a human book full of ancient poetry, with

kindred feeling and affection, and thus will the New come forth to us of itself in its purity, its sublime glory, and more than earthly beauty. Let a man gather into his own mind, the abundant riches of the former, and he will be in the latter also, none of those smatterers, who, barren, and without taste or feeling, desecrate these sacred things.

Weimar, April 9th; 1782.

HERDER.



DIALOGUE I.

PREJUDICES against the poetry and language of the Hebrews. Causes of these. The language full of action and animation from the mode of forming its verbs. Importance of this to its poetical character. Its nouns also express action. The want of adjectives supplied by multiplicity of names. In what classes of objects these are to be sought. Names of the productions of nature, synonyms, numerals, words relating to ornament and luxury derived from the neighbouring nations. Reasons why the Hebrew was not developed in the same manner as the Arabick. Of the roots of verbs. They combine sensuous form and feeling. Organic formation of words in Northern and Southern nations. Of derivation from radical words. Wish for a lexicon formed on philosophical principles. Of the tenses of Hebrew verbs and their poetical character. Conjunction of many ideas in one word. Significancy of Hebrew letters. How to be decyphered. Of parallelism. Founded in that correspondence of quantity which pleases the ear. Of parallelism in Greek metre. How far it lies in the nature of language and feeling. Something analogous even among the Northern nations. Causes of its peculiarity in the Hebrew language. Its influence and use. Whether the language had originally its present number of regular conjugations. Study of it as a poetical language. Study of its poetry.

ALCIPHON. So I find you still devoted to the study of this poor and barbarous language! A proof how much early impressions can effect, and how indispensably necessary it is, that our young minds be kept clear of the rubbish of antiquity. There is afterwards no hope of deliverance.

EUTHYPHRON. You speak like one of our modern illuminators, who would free men not only from the prejudices of childhood, but if possible from childhood itself. Do you know any thing of this barren and barbarous language? What are the grounds of your opinion concerning it?

A. I know enough of it to my sorrow. It was the torment of my childhood, and I am still haunted with the recollection of it, when in the study of theology, of philosophy, of history, and of what not, I hear the echo of its sublime nonsense. The rattling of ancient cymbals and kettle-drums, in short, the whole music-band of savage nations, which you love to denominate the oriental parallelism, is still ringing in my ears. I still see David dancing before the Ark of the covenant, or the prophets summoning a player, that they may feel his inspirations.

E. You seem then to have become acquainted with the language, but to have studied it with no very good will.

A. I cannot help that; it is enough that I studied it methodically with all the rules of Dantz. I could cite the rules, but never knew their meaning.

E. So much the worse, and I comprehend now the reason of your disgust. But my dear Sir, shall we permit ourselves to hate a science, which we have the misfortune to learn at first under a bad form? Would you judge a man by his dress alone? And that too when the dress is not his own, but forced upon him?

A. By no means, and I am ready to abandon all prejudices, so soon as you will shew them to be such. This, however, I think will be difficult, for I have pretty well tried both the language and its contents.

E. We will make the experiment, and one of us will become the teacher of the other. Truth is, indeed, to be bewailed, if men can never be at one respecting it. For myself I would execrate the impressions of my youth, if they must bind me through life with the fetters of a slave. But be assured, I have no youthful impressions from the poetical spirit of this language; I learned it as you did. It was long before I acquired a taste for its beauties, and only by degrees that I came to consider it, as I now do, a sacred language, the source of our most precious knowledge, and of that early

cultivation, which extending over but a small portion of the earth, came to us gratuitously and unsought.

A. You are driving at an apotheosis, at once.

E. At no such thing : we will consider it as a human language, and its contents as merely human. Nay, more, to give you better assurance of my perfect fairness, we will speak of it only as an instrument of ancient poetry. Are you pleased with this subject ? It has at least nothing insidious.

A. Certainly nothing, and with such a discussion I should be delighted in the highest degree. I am glad to converse of ancient languages, when they are treated only in relation to men. They are the form, in which human thoughts are moulded more or less perfectly. They exhibit the most distinguishing traits of character, and the manner in which objects are contemplated by different nations. Comparison of one with another in these points is always instructive. Proceed then to discuss the dialect, even of these Eastern Hurons. Their poverty may at least enrich us, and conduct us to thoughts of our own.

E. What do you consider most essential to a poetical language ? No matter whether it belong to the Hurons or Otaheitans. Is it not action, imagery, passion, musick, rhythm ?

A. Undoubtedly.

E. And the language that exhibits these in the highest perfection is most peculiarly poetical. Now you are aware, that the languages of people but partially cultivated may have this character in a high degree, and are in fact in this particular superior to many of the too refined modern languages. I need not remind you among what people Ossian, or at what period even the Grecian Homer sang.

A. It does not follow from this, that every savage race has its Homer and Ossian.

E. Perhaps many have even more, exclusively indeed for themselves, and not for the language of other nations. In

order to judge of a nation, we must live in their time, in their own country, must adopt their modes of thinking and feeling, must see, how they lived, how they were educated, what scenes they looked upon, what were the objects of their affection and passion, the character of their atmosphere, their skies, the structure of their organs, their dances and their music. All this too we must learn to think of not as strangers or enemies, but as their brothers and compatriots, and then ask, whether in their own kind, and for their peculiar wants, they had an Homer or an Ossian. You know in regard to how few nations we have instituted or are even now prepared to institute an inquiry of this kind. With regard to the Hebrews we can do it. Their poetry is in our hands.

A. But what poetry! and in what a language! How imperfect is it! how poor in proper terms and definitely expressed relations! How unfixed and uncertain are the tenses of the verbs! One never knows whether the time referred to by them be to day or yesterday, a thousand years ago, or a thousand years to come. Adjectives, so important in description, it scarcely has at all, and must supply their place by beggarly combinations. How uncertain and far-fetched is the signification of their radical words, how forced and unnatural the derivations from them! Hence the frightful forms of the catachresis, the far sought images, the monstrous combinations of ideas the most heterogeneous. The parallelism is monotonous, an everlasting tautology, that, without a metrical arrangement of words and syllables, after all very imperfectly satisfies the ear. *Aures perpetuis tautologiis lædunt*, says one of those best acquainted with them, *Orienti jucundis, Europæ invisis, prudentioribus stomachaturis, dormitaturis reliquis*. And he says the truth. This is observable in all the psalms and productions, that breathe the spirit of this language. Finally, it had no vowels, for these are a more modern invention. It stands as a lifeless and senseless hieroglyph, very often without any key or certain index of its

meaning, at all events without any certain expression of pronunciation and knowledge of its ancient rhythm. What do you find here of Homer and Ossian? As well look for them in Mexico, or upon the sculptured rocks of Arabia.

E. I thank you for the beautiful sketch you have traced out for our conversation. You have brought forward the rich materials, and that too with the reflection, and fine arrangement, that might be expected from one skilled in many languages. Let us proceed first to consider the structure of the language. Did you not say, that action and vivid imagery was the essence of poetry? and what part of speech paints or sets forth action itself to view, the noun, or verb?

A. The verb.

E. So the language, that abounds in verbs, which present a vivid expression and picture of their objects, is a poetical language. The more too it has the power of forming its nouns into verbs, the more poetical it is. The noun always exhibits objects only as lifeless things, the verb gives them action, and this awakens feeling, for it is itself as it were animated with a living spirit. Recollect what Lessing has said of Homer, that in him all is bustle, motion, action, and that in this the life, the influence, the very essence of all poetry consists. Now with the Hebrew the verb is almost the whole of the language. In other words every thing lives and acts. The nouns are derived from verbs, and in a certain sense are still verbs. They are as it were living beings, extracted and moulded, while their radical source itself was in a state of living energy. Observe in modern languages, what an effect it has in poetry, when verbs and nouns are still nearly related, and one may be formed into the other. Think of the English, the German. The language, of which we are speaking, is an abyss of verbs, a sea of billows, where motion, action, rolls on without end.

A. It seems to me however, that this abundance must always maintain a certain proportion to the other parts of

speech ; for if all be action, there is nothing, that acts. There must be the *subject, predicate, and copula*—so says logick.

E. For logick that will do, and for its masterpiece the syllogism it is necessary, but poetry is quite another thing, and a poem in syllogisms, would have few readers. In poetry the copula is the main thing, the other parts are necessary or useful only as accessories. Even should I admit, that for an abstract reasoner the Hebrew language may not be best, still it is, in regard to this active form of it so much the more favourable to the poet. Every thing in it proclaims “I live, and move, and act. The senses and the passions, not abstract reasoners and philosophers were my creators. Thus I am formed for poetry, nay my whole essence is poetry.”

A. But how if they use nouns for adjectives likewise ?

E. Then they have adjectives. For every language has that, which it uses ; only we must not judge of it according to our own necessities. There are many names of things, which this language has not, because the people neither had, nor knew the things themselves ; so on the other hand it has many others, which we have not. In abstract terms it is barren, but in sensuous representations it is rich, and it has numerous synonyms to denote one and the same object for the very reason, that this object is always mentioned, and as it were painted in its multifarious relations with all the circumstances, that accompany it, when presented to the senses. The lion, the sword, the serpent and the camel have even in the Arabick, the most cultivated of the Oriental languages this multiplicity of names, because each of them originally represented the object under a peculiar form, and in a particular point of view, and these streams afterwards flowed together. In Hebrew too this superabundance of sensuous terms is very observable, and yet how few of them have we remaining. More than 250 botanical terms occur in the small volume, that is left to us, of the writings of the Hebrews, and that too in

writings of a very uniform character in regard to their subjects, and composed mostly of history and the poetry of the temple. How rich then would the language have been, had it been handed down to us in the poetry of common life with all its diversity of scenes, or even in the writings, that were actually produced. It fared with the Hebrews probably, as with most nations of antiquity, the flood of ages has passed over them, and only a small remnant, such as Noah could preserve in the ark has escaped.

A. In my opinion we have enough notwithstanding, for even in these few books the same thing repeatedly occurs. But we are wandering from our subject. I can very well believe, that the language, of which we are speaking, in the hands of another people, might have become rich and refined. How copious has the Arabick become, and the Phœnician too may have been rich enough in the language of trade and numbers, but for this beggarly race of herdsmen, from what resources could they form a language?

E. Whence the genius of the people called, and where their wants required it. It were unjust to expect of them the language of trade belonging to the Phœnicians, or that of Arabian speculation, since they neither traded, nor speculated, and yet all this wealth may be said to belong to the language, for Phœnician, Arabick, Chaldee and Hebrew are radically and essentially but one language. The Hebrew has numerals to an amount that we cannot easily designate, and a multitude of terms for the products of nature, as well as for the forms of fashionable ornament and luxury, with which they were enough acquainted at an early period. It was used in the neighbourhood of the Phœnicians, the Ishmaelites, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, in short of the most cultivated nations of antiquity, and as it were of the then cultivated world, and borrowed from all enough to supply its wants. Had it continued a living language, it might have appropriated all that now belongs to the Arabick, which can justly

boast of being one of the most copious and refined languages in the world.

A. The Rabbins have in fact made contributions to it.

E. Of nothing valuable however, nor in accordance with the genius of its original structure. When they wrote, the nation was sunk in poverty, and dispersed over the world. Most of them conformed their mode of expression to the genius of the languages, that were spoken around them, and thus produced a sorry medley, not to be thought of in a discussion like this. We are speaking of the Hebrew, when it was the living language of Canaan, and of that too only during the period of its greatest beauty and purity, before it was corrupted by the introduction of Chaldee, Greek and other foreign terms. Within this limit you will not refuse to give it its due, as a poor, but yet a fair and uncorrupted child of its native hills, the simple language of the country and of herdsmen. The finery which it has borrowed from its neighbours, I would very gladly have dispensed with.

A. In regard to simplicity I admit its claims with all my heart. This trait, particularly in scenes of nature, I have felt with the emotions of childhood. Still, my dear Sir, this characteristick seems to me too limited in extent to have much redeeming effect and recurs with too much monotony, nothing has compass; their poets are forever sketching, but cannot give the finer touches of the pencil.

E. Yes, I grant you, they sketch, as few of our poets do. Their productions are not loaded with delicate and overwrought refinement, but vigorous, entire, instinct with life and spirit. Of their verbs we have already spoken. They are all action and emotion. Their radical forms combine the representation of a sensuous image with the feeling of the heart. The nouns too, retaining the properties of the verb, are still active agents, and exhibit a continual personification. Their pronouns stand out with the prominence, that they always possess in the language of passion, and the

want of adjectives is so supplied by the conjunction of other words, that the qualities merely of a subject, assume the form of distinct individual agents. From all these peculiarities the language seems to me, I confess, more poetical, than any other language on earth.

A. It will be most to our purpose, if we conduct the discussion by means of individual examples. Begin, if you please, with the radical forms, with the verbs.

E. The roots of the Hebrew verbs, I remarked, combine form and feeling, and I know no language in which the simple and unstudied combination of the two is so much an affair of the senses, and so remarkable. Not so sensible and obvious, I admit very willingly, to an ear accustomed only to the accents of Northern languages, but to you, who are acquainted with the principles of formation in the Greek language, to you, my dear Sir, it will not be difficult to go a few steps further, and observe with a congenial feeling, the method more forcible indeed, but not therefore more clumsy, of forming words in the East. I repeat it again, in the most pregnant terms of the language are combined the sensuous form and the sensation or sentiment that it produces. The language was moulded and uttered with a fuller expiration from the lungs, with organs yet pliable and vigorous, but at the same time under a clear and luminous heaven, with powers of vision acute, and seizing, as it were upon the very objects themselves, and almost always with some mark of emotion or passion.

A. Form and feeling, tranquility and passion, accents strong and yet light and flowing ! these are rare combinations.

E. Let us then analyze them and explain the matter more carefully. All Northern languages imitate the sounds of natural objects, but roughly, and as it were only by the mechanism of the outward organs. Like the objects they imitate, they abound with creaking, and rustling, and whizzing, and crashing sounds, which wise poets may employ sparingly

with effect, but which the injudicious will abuse. The cause of this is obviously to be found in the climate, and in the organs, in and by which the languages were originally formed. The further South, the more refined will be the imitation of nature. Homer's most sounding lines do not creak and hiss, they are sonorous. The words have passed through a refining process, been modified by feeling, and moulded as it were, in the vicinity of the heart. Thus they do not present uncouth forms of mere sound and noise, but forms on which feeling has placed its gentler impress. In this union of feeling from within, and form from without, in the roots of their verbs, the Oriental languages, I meant to say, are the best models.

A. Is it possible you are speaking of those barbarous and — uncouth gutturals? And do you venture to compare them with the silvery tones of the Greek?

E. I make no comparison. Every language suffers by being thus compared with another. Nothing is more exclusively national and individual than the modes of gratifying the ear, and the characteristick habitudes of the organs of speech. We, for example, discover a delicacy in articulating and uttering our words only from between the tongue and the lips, and in opening our mouths but little, as if we lived in an atmosphere of smoke and fog. The climate, our manners and the prevailing custom require it, and the language itself, has been gradually moulded into the same form. The Italians and still more the Greeks, think otherwise. The language of the former abounds in full and sonorous vowel sounds, and that of the latter with diphthongs, both of which are uttered not with the lips compressed together, but ore rotundo. The accents of the East are uttered forth more ab imo pectore, and from the heart. Elihu describes it, when he exclaims,

I am full of words,
My inmost spirit labours ;
Lo ! it is like wine without vent ;
My bosom is bursting, like new bottles :

I will speak, and make myself room;
I will open my lips and answer.

When these lips are opened, the utterance is full of animation, and bodies forth the forms of things, while it is giving vent to feeling, and this, it appears to me, is the spirit of the Hebrew language. It is the very breath of the soul. It does not claim the beauty of sound, like the Greek, but it breathes and lives. Such is it to us, who are but partially acquainted with its pronunciation, and for whom its deeper gutturals remain unuttered and unutterable; in those old times, when the soul was unshackled, what fulness of emotion, what store of words that breathe, must have inspired it. It was, to use an expression of its own,

The spirit of God that spake in it,
The breath of the Almighty that gave it life.

A. Once more you have nearly accomplished its apotheosis. Yet all this may be so in relation to the radical sounds, or the utterance of feeling that was prompted, while the object itself was present to the senses. But how is it with the derivations from these radical terms? What are they but an overgrown jungle of thorns, where no human foot has ever found rest?

E. In bad lexicons this is indeed the case, and many of the most learned philologists of Holland have rendered the way still more difficult by their labours. But the time is coming, when this jungle will become a grove of palms.

A. Your metaphor is an Oriental one.

E. So is the object of it. The root of the primitive word will be placed in the centre and its offspring form a grove around it. By influence of taste, diligence, sound sense, and the judicious comparison of different dialects, lexicons will be brought to distinguish, what is essential from what is accidental in the signification of words, and to trace the gradual process of

transition, while in the derivation of words, and the application of metaphors we come more fully to understand the logick of ancient figurative language. I anticipate with joy the time, and the first lexicon, in which this shall be well accomplished. For the present I use the best we have, Castell, Simon, Cocceius, and their rich contributors Schultens, Schroeder, Storr, Scheid, and any other, who has individually, or in associations contributed to the same object.

A. It will be long yet, before we shall repose ourselves in your palm-grove of Oriental lexicography. Pray in the mean time illustrate your ideas of derivation by an example.

E. You may find examples every where, even as the lexicons now are. Strike at the first radical form that occurs, as the primitive "he is gone," and observe the easy gradation of its derivatives. A series of expressions signifying loss, disappearance and death, vain purposes, and fruitless toil nad trouble succeed by slight transitions; and if you place yourself in the circumstances of the ancient herdsmen, in their wandering unsettled mode of life, the most distant derivative will still give back something of the original sound of the words, and of the original feeling. It is from this cause, that the language addresses itself so much to our senses, and the creations of its poetry become present to us with such stirring effect. The language abounds in roots of this character, and our commentators, who rather go too deep, than too superficially, have shown enough of them. They never know when to quit, and if possible would lay bare all the roots and fibres of every tree, even where one would wish to see only the flowers and fruits.

A. These are the slaves I suppose upon your plantation of palms.

E. A very necessary and useful race. We must treat them with mildness, for even, when they do too much, they do it with a good intention. Have you any further objections against the Hebrew verbs?

A. A good many more. What kind of an action is it, which has no distinctions of time. For the two tenses of the Hebrew are after all essentially aorists, that is, undefined tenses, that fluctuate between the past, the present, and the future, and thus it has in fact but one tense.

E. Does poetry employ more. To this all is present time. It exhibits actions and events as present, whether they be past, or passing, or future. For history, the defect, which you remark, may be an essential one. In fact, the languages, which incline to nice distinctions of time, have exhibited them most in the style of history. Among the Hebrews, history itself is properly poetry, that is the transmission of narratives, which are related in the present tense, and here too we may discover an advantage derived from the indefiniteness or fluctuation, of the tenses, especially in producing conviction, and rendering what is described, related or announced, more clearly and vividly present to the senses. Is not this in a high degree poetical? Have you never observed in the style of the poets or the prophets, what beauty results from the change of tenses? How that, which one hemistick declares in the past tense, the other expresses in the future? As if the last rendered the presence of the object continuous and eternal, while the first has given to the discourse the certainty of the past, where every thing is already finished and unchangeable. By one tense the word is increased at the end, by the other at the beginning, and thus the ear is provided with an agreeable variety, and the representation made a more present object of sense. The Hebrews besides, like children aim to say the whole at once, and to express by a single sound, the person, number, tense, action and still more. How vastly must this contribute to the sudden and simultaneous exhibition of an entire picture! They express by a single word, what we can express often only by five or more words. With us too these have a hobbling movement from the small and frequently unaccented syllables at the beginning or end; with

them the whole is joined by way of prefix, or as a sonorous termination to the leading idea. This stands in the centre like a king with his ministers and menials close around him. Rather they may be said to be one with him, coming in his train with measured steps and harmonious voice. Is this, think you, of no importance to a poetical language? Sonorous verbs, which convey at once so many ideas, are the finest material for rhythm and imagery. When I can utter, for example, all that is expressed by the words "as he has given me,"* in a single well sounding word, is it not more poetical and beautiful, than if I express the same idea in so many separate fragments?

A. For the eye I have sometimes considered this language as a collection of elementary paintings, which are to be decyphered, as it were, in a similar manner with the writing of the Chinese, and have often lamented, that children or youth, who are to learn it, are not early accustomed to this habit of decyphering or analyzing with the eye, which would aid them more than many dull and unmeaning rules. I have read of examples, where young persons, especially those whose senses were acute, have made great progress in this way in a short time. We neither of us enjoyed this advantage.

E. We may gradually acquire it however by employing the eye and the ear in conjunction. You will in this way too, remark the harmonious arrangement of vowels and consonants, and the correspondence of many particles and predominant sounds to the things signified. These are of great use too, especially in marking the metrical divisions, and denoting their mutual relation. The two hemisticks have a kind of symmetry, in which both words and ideas correspond in an alternation of parts, which are at the same time parallel, and give a free indeed, but very simple and sonorous rhythm.

* As the German and English correspond in this case, in the number of words, which express the idea, I have translated the illustration. **TR.**

A. You are describing, I suppose, the celebrated parallelisms, in regard to which I shall hardly agree with you. Whoever has any thing to say, let him say it at once, or carry his discourse regularly forward, but not repeat forever. When one is under the necessity of saying every thing twice, he shows, that he had but half or imperfectly expressed it the first time.

E. Have you ever witnessed a dance? Nor heard any thing of the choral odes of the Greeks, their strophe and antistrophe? Suppose we compare the poetry of the Hebrews to the movements of the dance, or consider it as a shorter and simpler form of the choral ode.

A. Add the systrum, the kettle-drums, and the symbals, and your dance of savages will be complete.

E. Be it so. We are not to be frightened with names, while the thing itself is good. Answer me candidly. Does not all rhythm, and the metrical harmony both of motion and of sound, I might say all, that delights the senses in forms and sounds, depend on symmetry? and that too a symmetry easily apprehended, upon simplicity and equality in the proportion of its parts?

A. That I will not deny.

E. And has not the Hebrew parallelism the most simple proportion and symmetry in the members of its verse, in the structure of its figures and sounds? The syllables were not indeed yet accurately scanned and measured, or even numbered at all, but the dullest ear can perceive a symmetry in them.

A. But must all this necessarily be at the expense of the understanding.

E. Let us dwell a little longer upon its gratefulness to the ear. The metrical system, of the Greeks, constructed with more art and refinement, than that of any other language, depends entirely on proportion and harmony. The hexameter verse, in which their ancient poems were sung, is in regard to its sounds a continued, though ever changing par-

allelism. To give it greater precision the pentameter was adopted and especially in the elegy. This again in the structure of its two hemisticks exhibits the parallelism. The finest and most natural species of the ode depend so much on the parallelism, as nearly to justify the remark, that the more a less artificial parallelism is heard in a strophe in conjunction with the musical attenuations of sound, the more pleasing it becomes. I need only to adduce as examples the Sapphic or Choriambic verse. All these metrical forms are artificial circlets, finely woven garlands of words and sounds. In the East the two strings of pearl are not twisted into a garland, but simply hang one over against the other. We could not expect from a chorus of herdsmen a dance as intricate, as the labyrinth of Dædalus or of Theseus. In their language, their shouts of joy, and the movements of the dance we find them answering one to another in regular alternations and the most simple proportions. Even this simplicity seems to me to have its beauties.

A. Very great undoubtedly to an admirer of the parallelism.

E. The two divisions of their chorus confirm, elevate and strengthen each other in their convictions or their rejoicings. In the song of Jubilee this is obvious, and in those of lamentation it results from the very nature of the feelings, that occasion them. The drawing of the breath confirms, as it were, and comforts the soul, while the other division of the chorus takes part in our afflictions, and its response is the echo, or, as the Hebrews would say, “the daughter of the voice” of our sorrow. In didactic poetry one precept confirms the other, as if the father were giving instruction to his son, and the mother repeated it. The discourse by this means acquires the semblance of truth, cordiality and confidence. In alternate songs of love the subject itself determines the form. Love demands endearing intercourse, the interchange of feelings and thoughts. The connexion between these different

expressions of feeling is so unaffected and sisterly in short, that I might apply to it the beautiful and delicate Hebrew ode,

Behold how lovely and pleasant
For brethren to dwell together,
It is like soothing oil upon the head,
That runs down upon the beard,
Even upon the beard of Aaron,
And descends to the hem of his garment.
It is like the dew of Hermon
Descending upon the mountains of Zion,
When the Lord commanded a blessing,
Even life eternal.

A. A fine view of parallelism undoubtedly. But granting that the ear may become accustomed to it, what becomes of the understanding? It is constantly fettered and can make no advances.

E. Poetry is not addressed to the understanding alone but primarily and chiefly to the feelings. And are these not friendly to the parallelism? So soon as the heart gives way to its emotions, wave follows upon wave, and that is parallelism. The heart is never exhausted, it has forever something new to say. So soon as the first wave has passed away, or broken itself upon the rocks, the second swells again and returns as before. This pulsation of nature, this breathing of emotion, appears in all the language of passion, and would you not have that in poetry, which is most peculiarly the offspring of emotion.

A. But suppose it aims to be and must be at the same time the language of the understanding?

E. It changes the figure and exhibits the thought in another light. It varies the precept, and explains it, or impresses it upon the heart. Thus the parallelism returns again. What species of verse in German do you consider as best adapted to didactic poetry?

A. Without question the Alexandrine.

E. And that is parallelism altogether. Examine carefully why it so powerfully enforces instruction, and you will find it to be simply on account of its parallelism. All simple songs and church hymns are full of it, and rhyme, the great delight of Northern ears, is a continued parallelism.

A. And to this same Oriental source we are indebted both for rhyme, and the uniform movement of our church musick. The Saracens have the former and the doxologies have introduced the latter. Otherwise we should and might very well have been without either.

E. Do you think so? Rhymes were in Europe long before the Saracens, correspondencies of sound either at the beginning or end of words, according as the ears of a people were accustomed, or as suited the form of their language. Even the Greeks had hymns and choral songs as simple as our own church hymns can be. The Hebrew parrallelism has however, we must admit, this advantage over our Northern languages, that with its small number of words it makes a more choice arrangement, and admits in the utterance a greater magnificence of sound. For us therefore it is nearly incapable of translation. We often use ten words, to express three of the Hebrew, the small words produce confusion, and in the end the piece becomes either harsh or wearisome. We must not so much imitate, as study and reflect upon it. In our languages the figures must be more extended and the periods rounded because we are accustomed to the Greek and Roman numbers. But in translating from the Orientals this must be laid aside, for by such a course we lose a great part of the original simplicity, dignity and sublimity of the language. For here too

He spake, and it was done :

He commanded, and it stood fast.

A. And yet monosyllabic brevity seems to me conducive to sublinity.

E. The Laconic style is neither the style of friendship nor of poetry. Even in the commands of a monarch, we wish to see the effects of the command, and so here the parallel form returns, in the command and its consequence. Finally, the concise structure of the Hebrew language, gives to the parallelism generally something of the style of command. It knows nothing of the oratorical numbers, of Greek or Roman eloquence. From its general spirit it uses few words ; these have mutual relations, and, from the uniformity of inflection being similar, they acquire both from the position of individual words, and the predominant feeling of the whole, a rythmical movement. The two hemisticks correspond as word and deed, heart and hand, or, as the Hebrews say, entrance and exit, and thus this simple arrangement of sound is complete. Have you any thing further against parallelism ?

A. I have even something to add in its favour. For, in regard to the understanding, I have often been thankful for its existence. Where should we be left in the explanation of so many obscure words, and phrases, if this did not serve for our guide. It is like the voice of a friend, that tells you far off in the thick and gloomy recesses of a forest, " Here, here are the dwellings of men." But indeed the ears of the ancients were deaf to this voice of friendship. They followed after the echo, as if it were itself a voice, and expected to find in the second member of the sentence some new and precious sentiment.

E. Let them go, while we endeavour to keep ourselves in the right way. But in regard to this pathless forest I think you have overdone the matter. In the beginning of our conversation, if you recollect, you represented the language, as a lifeless hieroglyphick without vowels, and without a key to its signification. Do you indeed believe, that the Orientals wrote entirely without vowels ?

A. Many say so.

E. And say too what is absurd. Who would write letters

without any means of giving them utterance? Since on the vowel sounds every thing terminates, and they must in reality be designated in some general way sooner than the various consonants, certainly when the more difficult task was accomplished, the easier would not be neglected, when too the whole object of the work depended on it.

A. Where then are these vowels?

E. Read on the subject a work,* which throws much light upon this, and many other points of Hebrew antiquity. It is the first introduction respecting the language and writings of the Hebrews, in which taste and learning are equally united. It is probable they had some, though few vowel marks (for those we now have are a later device of the Rabbins) and the *matres lectionis* are, it appears to me, a remnant of them. Grammatical nicety however, was not sought for in those ancient times, and the pronunciation was perhaps as unfixed as Otfried says, it was in the ancient German. Who has ever found an alphabet for every sound of every dialect, in which we speak? and who would use it if it were found? The letters stand as general signs, and every one modifies the sound to suit his own organs. A series of refined grammatical rules respecting the change of vowels, the mode of deriving the conjugations, &c. are, I fear, but empty sound.

A. And yet boys are tormented with them. I could never myself imagine, that a language so unrefined as the Hebrew could have so much regularity even in the import of the different conjugations, as young students are taught to find in every word.† The multitude of anomalous and defective words shows that it is not. The confidence in such distinctions, is derived from other Oriental languages, by which the Rabbins were fond of modifying this. They carried into the little Hebrew tent whatever it would hold.

* Eichhorn's *Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, Leipzig 1782. Th. 1 S. 126.

† In a work on the origin of language, p. 30. Herder says, the more uncultivated a language the more conjugations.

E. Here again we must not go too far. It is well to have seized upon the technical artificial form of the language, and for us it is necessary, although it is improbable, that such was its earliest form, or that every Hebrew had the same notion of it. How few even of our authors, have the entire form of their language to its minutest inflection so fully in their heads, as never to commit an error? How much too, does the structure of language vary with time? It is well that we have at last found men, who are directing their thoughts even to the grammar of this language.

A. After all it appears to me, that every one must make his own philosophical grammar. He may omit the vowels and other marks now and then, and bring the conjugations nearer together. It is not necessary always, to go through all the seven changes of a verb, to learn its form.

E. He may become too, by this method, a second Mascler or Hutchinson. The best course is to have the eye diligently practised with the paradigms, and the ear with the living sounds of the language, and both habitually associated. In this manner one comes at the genius of the language, and makes the rules more easy. The language will then be no longer a schoolboy and Rabbinical jargon, but the old Hebraic, that is, a poetical language. The attention of the boy must be awakened to it, that of the youth rewarded by its poetry; and I am confident, that not only boys but old men, would hold their Bible as dear, as their Homer or Ossian, if they knew what was in it.

A. Perhaps I may also, if you proceed with me, as you have begun.

E. We will continue the discussion of the subject in our walks, and more especially in our morning rambles. The poetry of the Hebrews, should be heard under the open sky, and if possible in the dawn of the morning.

A. Why at this particular time?

E. Because it was itself the first dawning of the illumination

of the world, while our race was yet in its infancy. We see in it the earliest perceptions, the simplest forms, by which the human soul expressed its thoughts, the most uncorrupted affections that bound and guided it. Though we should be convinced that it contained nothing remarkable, yet the language of nature in it, we must believe, for we feel it. The first perceptions of things, must be dear to us, for we should gain knowledge by them. In it the earliest Logick of the senses, the simplest analysis of ideas and the primary principles of morals, in short, the most ancient history of the human mind and heart, are brought before our eyes. Were it even the poetry of cannibals, would you not think it worthy of attention for these purposes?

A. We meet again, you say, in the morning.

DIALOGUE. II.

Dawn of the morning. It presents an image of the creation of the world.

Earliest views of nature. First feeling and conception of the Great Spirit, as a powerful being. Whether this feeling was a slavish fear, or brutal stupidity. Probable origin of ideas of the terrible in the religions of antiquity. Example of clear notions of God, as a God of power, and also as supreme in wisdom. Of the Elohim. Probable origin of the idea of them. Whether it gave occasion to idolatry. Necessity and use of the idea of one God to the human understanding. Service of poetry in confirming and extending it. Simple means to this end, the parallelism of the heavens and the earth. What the poetry of the Orientals gained by connecting them and exhibiting their relations. Its mode of representing God at rest and in action. His word. Early notions of the angels. Images of God as the ever active Lord of Creation.

The first rays of the dawn were not yet visible, when the two friends found themselves together at an appointed spot, a delightful eminence, that furnished a wide and beautiful prospect. They saw before them all the objects of nature lying yet formless and undistinguished, for the night had wrapt them up in its veil of obscurity. But soon the night breeze sprang up, and the morning appeared in its loveliness. Its going forth was as if the Almighty had cast a reviving look upon the earth and renovated its existence; while his glory accompanied it, and consecrated the heavens as his magnificent and peaceful temple. The higher it rose, the more elevated and serene appeared the golden firmament, that gradually purified itself from the subsiding waters, clouds and vapours, till it stood displayed, as an upper ocean, an expanse of sapphire interwoven with gold. In the same manner also the earth seemed to rise up before them. Its dark masses

became distinguished, and at length it stood forth like a bride, adorned with herbage and flowers, and waiting for the blessing of Jehovah. The soul of man elevates and purifies itself like the morning sky ; it wakes and rouses itself from slumber, like the virgin earth ; but at no moment is the delightful view attended with such sacred awe, as at the first existence of light, the breaking forth of the dawn, when, as the Hebrews say, the hind of the morning is struggling with the shades of night, and, with its head and knees bended together, waits for the moment of release. It is, as it were a birth of the day ; and every being shudders with a pleasing dread, as if conscious of the presence of Jehovah. The most ancient nations made a distinction between the light of the dawn, and that of the sun ; considering it an uncreated being, a brightness that gleamed from the throne of Jehovah, but was returned again, so soon as the sun awoke to shine upon the earth. It is the vicegerent of the Deity, behind which Jehovah himself is concealed.

EURHYPROX. Observe, my friend, the peculiarity and splendour of the view which at this moment opens before us. It was from this that knowledge first dawned upon the human mind, and this perhaps was the cradle of the first poetry and religion of the earth.

ALCIPROX. You agree then with the author of "The earliest Monuments," but remember his views have been controverted.

E. So far as our purpose is concerned, nothing has been or can be objected to them, so long as the morning dawn remains what it is. Have we not at this moment beheld and admired all the changing scenes in this vast work of creation ? From the dark moving pictures of night to the magnificent uprising of the sun, with whom all beings in air and water, in the ocean and upon the earth seem to awake into being, the whole has passed before us. Is it objected, that the moon and stars do not come forth simultaneously with the sun ? Perhaps

too you may add with equal force on the other hand, that all the phenomena of the morning belong to every day, while those of creation are to be divided into the labours of six. But why waste our time with such discussions? Not only the first brief history of the creation, but all the Hebrew songs in praise of it, nay the very names of those glorious phenomena, that we just now saw before and around us, were for the most part formed, as it were, in the immediate view of those very scenes; and it was this view that prompted the most ancient poetry of nature on the subject of the creation.

A. When, and by whom, was such poetry formed?

E. I know not, for my understanding cannot carry back its researches to the cradle of human improvement. It is sufficient, that the poetical roots of the language, the hymns, that celebrate the creation, and fortunately the first sketch of a picture, after or in conjunction with which both seem to have been formed, are still extant. What if we, in our present interview, inquire into the earliest ideas, derived from the contemplation of nature, and from the connexion and progress of its changing and varied scenes, which are exhibited in this childlike and beautiful poetry of nature? We can hardly spend our morning hours in a more suitable manner.

A. With all my heart; and I am convinced, that to the great being who pervades and surrounds us, nothing is more acceptable than the thankful offering of our inquiring thoughts. The morning of the day will remind us of the morning of intellectual illumination, and give to our souls the vigour of youth, and the freshness of the dawn. In general I have remarked, that the poetry of every people is characterized by the influence of the climate, in which it is formed. A depressing, cold, cloudy atmosphere, gives rise to images and feelings of the same character; where the sky is serene, open, and expanded, the soul also expands itself, and soars without restraint.

E. I could say much against such a theory, but let it pass.

Those features of poetry, and those images, to which I wish now to direct your attention, are those which spring from the earliest and most childlike intuitions and feelings of the human mind, and are occasioned by the more obvious appearances and events of the external world. These are every where the same. In all climates, and under every sky, night is night, and morning is morning. The heavens and the earth are every where spread above and beneath us ; and the spirit of God, which fills them, which gives to man his elevation, and, at the view of the glories around him, kindles up the native poetry of the heart and the understanding, extends to all its creative energies.

A. Begin, then, if you please, with the primitive notions of the human mind.

E. With what else could I begin, than with the name of Him, who in this ancient poetry animates and binds every thing together ; whom it denominated the *strong* and the *migh-ty* ; whose power was every where witnessed ; whose unseen presence was felt with a shuddering of reverential fear ; whom men honoured ; whose name gave a sanction to the solemnities of an oath ; whom they called by way of eminence, the Great Spirit, and whom all the wild and untaught nations of the earth still seek after, and feel and adore. Even among the most savage tribes, how elevated does poetry and sentiment become through the all-pervading feeling of this infinite, invisible Spirit ! To them the remarkable phenomena, and the active powers of nature, appear as the index of his immediate presence and agency, and they fall down and worship him. Not from slavish fear and senseless stupidity, but with the lively feeling, that in these manifestations of his power, he is nearer to them, they offer up, in honour of the great Spirit, their dearest possessions with childlike forms, and awe-struck adoration. This feeling pervades the history of all ancient people, their languages, their hymns, their names of God, and their religious rites, of which, from the ruins of the an-

cient world, a multitude of monuments and proofs will occur to your observation.

A. They do so, but the philosophers have explained this feeling of awe in a far different manner. Fear and ignorance, say they, have produced imaginary gods. Slavish terror and brutal stupidity have paid them homage, as powerful but malignant beings, in short as invisible and evil demons. In all languages religion employs terms of fear and dread, and in the Hebrew they adduce as proof a catalogue of the most ancient names of God.

E. The hypothesis, like most others that are brought forward, is not a new one, and I fear is as false as it is old, for nothing is more easily misinterpreted by frigid, and at the same time superficial thinkers, than unsophisticated human feeling. So far as I am acquainted with antiquity, I think I discover continually increasing evidence, that this feeling of reverential homage is, in its simple and primitive character, neither the servile homage of a slave, nor the stupidity of a brute. The circumstance, that all nations worship gods of some kind, distinguishes them from the brutes; and almost universally the feeling has prevailed, that our existence is a blessing, not a curse; that the Supreme Being is good, and that the service, which we ought to yield to him, must not be an offering of fear and terror, presented as to an evil demon.

A. But are you not acquainted with many observances that spring from terror, and have you never read the books of an author,* who derives all religions from the desolation of the world by the flood, and fearful forebodings of renewed destruction?

E. Do not disturb his ashes—He was a superintendant of bridges and dikes, and so must ex-officio believe in a Neptunian philosophy. His books are so bad, his learning so full of uncertainty, and his imagination so confused, that they al-

* Boulanger.

together very much resemble the waters of the deluge. But we will go upon safe ground, and admit, that the religion of many ancient nations had indeed a mixture of terror ; especially of nations who dwelt in inhospitable regions, among rocks and volcanoes, on the shores of a tempestuous sea, or in caves and mountain cliffs, or whose minds were impressed by some great devastation, or other terrible events. But these are plainly exceptions, for the whole earth is not a perpetual deluge, nor a burning Vesuvius. The religion of nations in milder regions we find mild, and even among those most impressed with ideas of the terrific, the existence of a powerful good spirit is never wholly given up, and still almost always predominates in its influence. Finally, all these appendages, the offspring of fear, superstition, and priestcraft, belong in fact to later times. The ideas of the most ancient religions, are grand and noble. The human race seems to have been originally furnished with a fine treasure of knowledge, unbiassed and uncorrupted ; but their degeneracy, their wanderings and misfortunes, have alloyed it with baser metal. But let us leave this tumultuous crowd of nations ; we are now to speak of one people, and of one language.

A. Of one, however, in which the most ancient names of God are indicative, not of benevolence and love, but of power and reverence.

E. True, these are the first impressions in relation to the incomprehensible Creator. Power, boundless power, is the attribute, that first fixes the attention of a feeble creature of the earth. He cannot but feel this, and his own comparative weakness, since his breath is in the hands of God, and his very existence but the effect of his will, his to us incomprehensible power. The ancient book of Job furnishes the clearest proof of this on every page.

Well do I know, that it is thus,
For what is a man, against God ?
Even the wise, and the powerful,

Who hath withstood him, and prospered ?
 He removeth mountains in a moment,
 He overturneth them in his wrath.
 He shaketh the earth from its foundation,
 And its pillars tremble.
 He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not;
 He sealeth up the stars in their dwellings;
 He spreadeth out the heavens alone,
 And walketh upon the summit of the waves.
 He hath made *Libra* and the polar star,
 'The seven stars and the chambers of the *South*.
 He doeth great things, that are unsearchable,
 And wonderful things, without number.
 Lo! he passeth by me, and I see him not;
 Before me, and I am not aware of it.
 He taketh away, and who shall restore ?
 Who shall say, what doest thou ?

Do you not believe, that this lofty feeling is the feeling of nature ? and that the more clear and comprehensively a people beholds in every thing the power of God, the more stirring and forcible will be the expression of it ? Even the wisdom of the God, whom they worship, by which he has formed not only the inanimate but the animate creation, is to them but a form of power, a vast ocean of intellectual energies, in whose depths they are lost. Do you not recollect an example of this in Hebrew poetry ?

A. You allude to my favorite psalm ; it shall now be also my morning prayer.

Jehovah, thou searchest and knowest me.
 Thou knowest when I sit down, and when I arise,
 Thou beholdest my thoughts from afar.
 Whether I am going, or lying down, thou seest me,
 And art acquainted with all my ways.
 Before a word is formed upon my tongue,
 Lo ! O Lord, thou knowest it all.
 Thou hast shapen me in every part,
 And placed thy forming hand upon me.
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
 5*

It is high, I cannot attain to it.
 Whither shall I go from thy spirit ?
 Whither shall I flee from thy presence ?
 If I ascend into heaven, thou art there !
 If I make my bed in the abyss, thou art there ;
 If I soar on the wings of the dawn,
 And dwell in the uttermost sea,
 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
 And thy right hand guide me,
 If I say, the darkness shall cover me,
 The night shall be for day to me,
 Even the darkness shall not hide from thee.
 The night is clear to thee, as the day ;
 Darkness and light are alike to thee.

For thou hast formed my inward parts,
 Thou didst environ me in my mother's womb.
 I will praise thee for the wonders of my form ;
 All thy works are wonderful ;
 My soul knoweth it well.
 My bones were not hid from thee,
 When I was shapen in secret,
 Curiously wrought in the depths of the earth.
 When yet unformed, thine eyes beheld me,
 And in thy book was I already described ;
 The days of my life already numbered.
 How weighty are thy thoughts to me, O God !
 How overwhelming the sum of them !
 Do I number them ? they are more than the sand :
 I awake as from a dream, and am still with thee.

E. You have contended boldly with the expression of the original ; but, to be frank, I confess the heartfelt simplicity of Luther, even when less minutely correct, seems to me more stirring to the feelings, perhaps because my ear was accustomed to it at an early period. Can you name to me such a hymn as this, full of the finest natural theology, from any other people equally ancient ? Here are the purest conceptions of God, of his omniscience, and his fore-knowledge, his intimate acquaintance with the human soul, his omnipresence, the efficacy of his purpose in our formation as in

the creation and government of all things, and that too set forth with energy and fervour. Even the thoughts, of which many modern philosophers make so much, that God in his being has no analogy with any created object, that night and day are alike to him, are in many passages, of Job, and the prophets ; and even in the simple word *holy*, that is, wholly incomparable, so appropriately expressed, that I know no purer Theism than prevails in these songs of praise.

A. But recollect to what period these fine passages belong, and that in the most ancient hymn to the creation, the Elohim still prevail.

E. Without doubt Moses found the term in this ancient picture of the creation ; for he, the great enemy of polytheism, and of all that might lead to it, would certainly not have introduced it.

A. Such is my belief, and he joined with it perhaps the word *created* in the singular to guard against the tendency to polytheism. But notwithstanding the primitive idea of Elohim remained still polytheistick. It was the Elohim, at whose wisdom the serpent taught the first man to aspire and who probably in the opinion of Eve derived their wisdom from the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The East, as you well know, is peopled with invisible beings, and has especially one race of refined spirits, which subsist on the fragrant exhalations of trees, wage war with the giant spirits of evil, and preside over plants, trees, flowers, mountains, even the elements, the stars, &c. Polytheism of this kind is suited to all uncultivated nations, and the rich imaginations of the Orientals could hardly remain free from it. To them every thing appeared instinct with life, and they peopled the universe with living beings. Such are the Elohim, the Adonim, and Schadin of the Hebrews, the Izeds of the Parsi, the Lahi of the Thibetians, (a name that seems to resemble Elohim,) the Demons of the Orphic hymns ; in a word, the most ancient spirits and gods of the uncivilized world.

E. Be it so if you please. Do you find any thing debasing in the idea, that a weak creature of the earth, like man, who looks with wonder upon the beauty of the world, and meets with no visible author of it ; who beholds every where power and wisdom, a self-regenerating and exhaustless creative energy, and becomes attached to particular objects of beauty should assign to these objects each its own invisible creator, preserver, and restorer ? To the bodily eye the theatre of the world is destitute of causes, and yet intensely filled with effects. How natural then for one to imagine to himself distinct and appropriate creative agents, of which one formed this, another that fair work of creation, as a tree, a plant, or an animal, with perhaps a fond partiality for it, and a profound feeling of its wants, and the capacities of its nature for enjoyment. These creative beings maintained an affectionate sympathy with every part of the creatures of their power, and, according to the more common representation, transformed sometimes plants into their own form, and sometimes themselves to that of plants. The genius of each living product was believed to perish and revive along with it ; in short, these Elohim were then perhaps the Genii of the creation, but probably connected in this more ancient faith with none of those fabulous tales, which the later mythology invented for them. As the angels properly so called, of whom we shall speak by and by, came into vogue, these Elohim and Genii fell into neglect ; those stood around the throne of God, and were princes of heaven, these but the attendants and protectors of the lower orders of the creation, and so subaltern spirits. The later mythologies of the East have many fables respecting the relations and contests of these two orders of beings, telling us how the Genii secretly listened behind the curtain of the Great King in the councils of the angels, how they were watched, and punished, &c. If the origin of these representations of the Elohim was entirely as I have now described it, was it not innocent ? or could you have any thing to object to it.

A. So far as feeling and poetry are concerned, nothing at all. To the imagination, indeed, it is even a benefit. It places man in a world full of animation, where every flower, every tree, every star rejoices with us, has its own spirit, and feels its own principles of life. What pleases and improves the imagination here, however, may not be so acceptable to the understanding.

E. Why not? Even in the most ancient times this idea had among these nations no connexion with polytheism. From one of the psalms of David we learn, that the Elohim were spirits but little superior to man in rank and excellence, while at the same time the doctrine of the unity of God the Creator, cannot be mistaken in the first picture of the creation. This one doctrine too, as it seems to me, has given an elevation and truth, a simplicity and wisdom to the poetry of these Orientals, which rendered its subsequent influence, as the guide of civilization, a blessing to the world. It is impossible to say what treasures of knowledge and morality were destined to accrue to our race from the idea of the unity of God. He turned away in consequence from superstition, from idolatry, from the vices and abominations of divinely authorized disorder, and became accustomed to remark in every thing unity of purpose, and so by degrees wisdom, love, and benevolence in the laws of nature; to find unity in multiplicity, order in disorder, and light in darkness. From the idea of one creator the world came to be considered as a united whole; (*κοσμος*;) the mind of man was directed to its combined glories, and learned wisdom, order and beauty. The contributions of philosophy and poetry to the same end have also produced the most beneficial effects, especially the poetry, of which we are treating. It was the most ancient obstacle to the progress of idolatry, of which we have any knowledge, and it poured the first bright beam of unity and order into the chaos of the creation. Can you tell by what means it has accomplished all this?

A. What are they?

E. A very simple matter, the parallelism of the heavens and the earth. The works of creation must in some way be separated and classed in order ; the more unstudied, the more obvious, clear, and comprehensive the division, the more likely to be perpetuated, and this has been so.

A. Where ?

E. In this whole body of poetry, which I might therefore almost denominate the poetry of heaven and earth. The earliest picture of the creation is arranged after this model, and the division of the so called six days' work has also a reference to it. When the heaven is lifted up, the earth is brought forth also and adorned ; when the air and the water are peopled, the earth also becomes inhabited. The same parallelism of the heavens and the earth pervades all the hymns of praise that are grounded on this picture of creation ; the psalms, where all the works of nature are invoked to praise their Creator ; the most solemn addresses of Moses and the prophets ; in short, it appears most extensively throughout the poetry and the language.

A. And yet the division seems to me to have no useful relation between its parts. What is the earth in comparison with the heavens, or what relation have the heavens to the earth ?

E. It is one of the very objects of this poetry to contrast the boundlessness of the heavens with the nothingness of the earth, their elevation with our abasement. For this end the radical forms of the language employ all their descriptive powers and bold imagery. Do you recollect no examples of it ?

A. Examples in abundance.

Heaven is my throne,
The earth my footstool.

E. An image so grand that I might add to it,

My limit is infinity,

Or, with Job might ask,

Wilt thou find out the wisdom of Eloah ?
 Wilt thou fathom the perfection of Shaddai ?
 It is high as heaven, what wilt thou do ?
 Deeper than the abyss, what dost thou know ?
 Its measure is longer than the earth,
 And broader than the sea.

Here you perceive the notion of the boundlessness of the world of sense. Of that which we call the universe, these ancient nations knew nothing. The name *world*—*Aeon*—in later times gave to them the idea of every thing despicable, worthless, and evanescent. The heavens grow old, and are changed like a garment, the earth is a theatre for phantoms, and senseless apparitions, and a burial place for the dead ; but it is the God of the heavens and the earth, who was before the mountains, and remains eternal as the heavens. He it is, who created and renews them, before whom the heavens flee away and the earth is scattered and dispersed in immensity like the dust.

A. But what, I must ask still, has poetry gained by this parallelism, that has no correspondencies ?

E. To me it seems to have gained much. By this it was led to compare the finite and the infinite, and to contrast immensity with nothingness. All that is fair, grand and sublime, is, in the imagination of the Orientals, heavenly ? the low, weak, and insignificant, is placed in the dust of the earth. All power descends from heaven : all that is beneath, by means of invisible but powerful ties, is ruled, guided, and disposed of from above. Above, the stars emit their everlasting radiance ; there are expanded the clear and cloudless heavens, and the sky lifts its azure arch in undisturbed serenity ; beneath, all is mutable, earth-born dust, and corrupted. The more the human soul connected the two, and learned to contemplate them together, the more its views became enlarg-

ed, correct, and marked with wisdom. It learned to define, to measure, and to number the earthly by means of the heavenly. It reached a point above the world, from which to direct and govern the world itself. Do you not believe, that mere earthborn poetry, however refined, must be necessarily poor and grovelling? All elevating and sublime poetry is by an influence from above.

A. Yet, let me say, it is mother earth that gives to all forms their characteristick outline, and consequently their beauty.

E. For that reason too, the Orientals associate the heavens and the earth together. From the former their poetry gains sublimity, compass, clearness, and energy, just as our souls receive the impress of sublimity when we direct our eyes to heaven. The heavens are the efficient cause, the earth the instrument and theatre of its effects, only not the perpetual theatre. Even in the formation of man the heavens and the earth co-operate; from this he receives his body, from those his living spirit. As the atom on which we walk is encompassed by the heavens, so the little sphere of our observation and knowledge floats in the immensity of the eternal, where all is glory, energy, and spotless perfection. To me that poetry seems great which holds us to the steadfast contemplation of what we are, and what we are not; of the high, the low, the weak, and the powerful; it would be false and delusive, should it give one part only of these opposite views, and mutilate, or withhold the other. All sublimity requires the boundless and immense, in short, the heavens; as all beauty and truth requires definite limits, that is the earth.

A. You have very well defended your parallelism, and I am desirous to follow it myself through the poetry of Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets, and know whether, as you say, so much that is great and beautiful is dependent on it, as to reward the frequent appeal,

Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak,
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

Show me now, however, in what manner the one God of heaven and earth is instrumental in poetry also in associating and binding them together.

E. He connects them at some times in a state of rest, at others in action. At rest, when, as an eastern king, he sits enthroned in the heavens, and commands the creation of the world by a word. And here again the first and most sublime parallelism of the two became the model for the manner of representation in after times :—

God said let light be,
And light was.

This sublime language of God becomes in various ways, in the poetry of the Hebrews, the form for the most concise and forcible images, in which the style always is,

He spake, and it was done,
He commanded, and it stood fast.

The more strange and obscure the object, which God commanded, and which obeyed his will, the more wonderful, and the greater the beauty which it confers:—

He said to the snow, be upon the earth,
To the rain also, and torrents were poured forth.

One of the psalms, that is generally indeed interpreted in a too spiritual sense, exhibits a similar picture :—

He sendeth forth his word upon the earth.
His word runneth swiftly.
He giveth snow, like wool,
He scattereth hoar-frost, like ashes.
He casteth forth his ice like morsels,

Who can stand before his frost ?
 He sendeth his word again, they are melted.
 His wind returns, the waters flow freely.

Here the word of God is personified, as a messenger, as it often is by the Hebrews.

A. In that they do wisely ; for if the command and the effect are always to be repeated, their sublime poetry must soon become monstrous, and tediously uniform.

E. It is not wanting in personifications, for indeed all its employment of angels is nothing more. The most ancient idea was not, that they stood as inactive beings, and sung around the throne of God, but rather, that all the objects of nature at his command became angels and living beings.

He maketh the winds, his messengers,
 His ministers, the flaming fire.

The book of Job is full of these personifications. The stars especially afford us one of the earliest and finest conceptions of angels, as the messengers of God. Their sublimity and beauty, their untroubled radiance, and ceaseless motion excite at once the idea of sustained delight, and the harmonious movements of musick, and the dance. At first they were the daughters of God, who encompassed his throne with joyful exultation ; soon they became his host of warriors, in splendid battle array ; and then they appear also in the form of his messengers and servants. In Job we shall see admirable examples of all this, and contrasted with them, his earth-born servants, sunk in comparative debasement. Thus the God of the Elohim, that is of the Genii and the rulers of the lower creation, is still in a higher sense the king of angels, and of the host of heaven, Jehovah Sabaoth ; although this was indeed an idea of somewhat later times.

A. Why so ?

E. Because in earlier times God was not thought of, as an

unconcerned and inactive king, enthroned apart in the heavens, but as a father and master of a family, whose busy agency was every where felt. As in the picture of the creation nothing was too small or insignificant to be beneath his creating power, so he daily creates and orders every thing anew. He daily stretches out the heavens, as when he first created them, and goes for this end on the billows of the ocean to the utmost bounds of the horizon, where he pitches his tent. Daily he calls forth the dawn, as he called it at first, divides out the rain, and opens the treasures of his household. He ties up the clouds, like leathern bags, traces out channels in heaven, and gives the lightnings his commands ; clothes the flowers and cherishes the plants, generates the dew, and provides for all beneath the sky.

Job and the Psalms are full of images, in which, as the ever active father of his family, no work, and no creature is beneath his care. What heartfelt interest, what wakeful and ever increasing confidence in God this must give to Hebrew poetry, is better felt than described. But not the Hebrew poetry alone ; all the poetry of the Orientals is full of praises of the Divine Being, that would be surpassed with as much difficulty, as the childlike confidence in him and submission to his will, which form the groundwork of their religion.

A. Is theirs a good groundwork however ? If God is thus concerned in the control of the smallest objects of nature, will not men become unconcerned and inactive ? If the hosts of God are every where encamped to relieve our labours, of what use is human effort and skill ?

E. Of this we shall have an opportunity to speak hereafter. At present the sun is in the heavens, and warns us, that our chosen hour is past. Go we then to our labours : the morning will return, when we meet again.

As an appendix to the German there is published here a hymn to the Deity from the Persian, to exemplify the remarks on the general character of this class of Oriental poetry. It is taken by Herder from an English work, "Specimens of the Institutes of Timour, by Hunter and

White." As it is not very necessary to the general object of the work, I have not thought it worth the while to retranslate it, and know not where to find the work from which it was taken.

DIALOGUE III.

Thoughts suggested by night and twilight. The state of unborn souls. Job's description of ancient night. Had the Orientals any idea of a chaos? Their notions of the most ancient condition of the earth. The Spirit upon the waters. Origin of the sensuous idea of Spirits. Voice of a nightly apparition in Job. First appearance of light. Its gladdening effect. Glowing pictures of it in the poetry of the Orientals. Personifications of light, and of the dawn. Poetical images of heaven, as an arch of waters, as a treasure house of all that is animating and refreshing; as sapphire, and as the tent of the father of creation. Poetical geogony of the Orientals. How far it corresponds to the natural history of our earth. Animation of plants. Its effect in giving a delicacy of spirit, and comprehensiveness of feeling to poetry. Why have the Hebrews no hymns to the sun and stars? Personifications. Beautiful and correct use of them in Hebrew poetry. Representation of the stars, as angels; as daughters of God, as an army, as a flock of sheep under the Supreme Shepherd. Particular passages respecting them. Of the lively sympathy of Oriental poetry with the brute creation. Of God as their universal parent. Why in this poetry brutes are sometimes put before man. Of men. David's hymn to the creation.

On the following day Alciphron did not fail to be punctual at the morning hour of poetry. We must not dwell to day, as we did yesterday, said Euthyphron, when they met together, on individual ideas, but I will direct you to a more general picture, and at the same time richer, than the tablet of Cebes. Is not one suggested to you by this fearful obscurity, in which all beings are at this moment involved, as if impatiently waiting for the light.

A. Do you mean the state of the dead among the Orientals?

E. That is not the topic, with which to begin our conversation. I was thinking indeed, of Sheol, but rather as the state of things yet unborn, which are waiting for the light, and hoping to find along with it unmingled joy. Recollect, for illustration, the night to which Job doomed in his imprecations the hour of his birth. There sleep unborn nights and days. God looks down from his elevation, and calls forth this or that as he pleases, and it comes forth with exultation to join the choir of its companions in the circular dance of the year.

Perish the day, in which I was born ;
 The night when they said, a son is brought forth,
 Let that day be darkness,
 Let not God inquire after it from above,
 And let no light shine upon it.

Let darkness and death-shade seize it,
 The clouds ever rest upon it,
 The blackness of misfortune terrify it.

That night ! let darkness take it away,
 That it join not the days of the year,
 Nor come into the number of the months.

Let that night be set apart by itself ;
 Let no song of joy resound in it.
 May those curse it, who curse the day,
 Who can call up the monsters of the deep.

May the stars of its twilight be dark ;
 Let it wait for the light, and light come not ;
 Nor let it see the eyelids of the dawn,
 Because it shut not up my mother's womb,
 Nor hid evil from my eyes.

Where have you seen the ancient night to which this unhappy man consigned his birth-day, or the gloom of a starless, rayless, and horrible darkness, that waits in vain for the morning, more fearfully described ? No song of gladness cheers it, and its silence is interrupted only by the muttered spells of those, at whose enchantments the day goes not forth to

interrupt them in their works of darkness. You know how Shakspeare describes a night like this.

A. He does not yield to the Orientals. But you said something of the state of unborn souls. The passage you have repeated seems to me to have no reference to such a state.

E. The realms that contain them, however, are silent and formless as the night. They are shaped in the deepest obscurity, in the centre of the earth, and there wait the light, as at this moment all creatures wait for it. The hour of their birth is struck—God calls them forth.

A. The representation is remarkably adapted to the senses.

E. Like all the poetical fictions of the Hebrews. They knew nothing for example of a chaos, in which before the formation of our world the atoms that compose it, were driven about, as chance directed ; a fiction, for which we are indebted to the Greeks. In their minds its place was supplied by a dark gloomy sea, upon which the wind of the Almighty was hovering with an agitating effect ; and the picture, as it appears to me, is so much the finer for being true. Such was in fact the first condition of our earth, as the structure of it shows, and so it must have stood for ages, until, by the wonders of creation, it became inhabitable. This picture has something in it natural and conceivable ; that formless chaos has neither.

A. The spirit, to which you allude, that brooded over the waste and fathomless abyss, is to me peculiarly striking, and never fails to inspire me with awe.

E. It was to the Orientals the first and most natural image of that which constitutes life, power, impulse in creation ; for the idea of a spirit seems originally to have been formed from the feeling of the wind, especially at night, and combined with power, and the sound of a voice.

A. You remind me of the appearance of an apparition in Job. There is form and yet no form ; a gentle whisper, a murmuring like the voice of the wind, but with it also the pow-

er of the wind, the energy of spirit. It raises the hair on end, and rouses all the terrors of the soul. "It harrows up the soul with fear and wonder."

A word stole secretly to me,
 Its whispers caught my ear;
 At the hour of night visions,
 When deep sleep falleth upon man,
 I was seized with fear and shuddering,
 And terrors shook my frame.
 A spirit was passing before me,
 All my hair stood on end.
 He stood still, but I saw not his form,
 A shadowy image was before my eyes;
 It was silently whispered to me,
 How can man, &c.

E. There is as you say a form without form, silence, and yet a voice, and after all the powerful effect alone indicates the formless figure, and so it must be. The more closely defined its features, the feebler would their effect become. Form and definiteness are incompatible with our notions of spirit: it is the offspring of the wind, and must preserve the character of its origin. But look! yonder come the glories of the morning. Let us leave the visions of night to their repose, while we adore the Father of Light.

Jehovah, my God, thou art full of majesty,
 Thou art clothed with dignity and glory.
 He putteth on the light, as a garment,
 He spreadeth out the heavens as a tent.

When the first morning beam shot forth, thou, the creator, didst declare the light to be good, and didst consecrate it to be an eternal emblem of thy presence, and of thy divine glory, of all delight and purity, of all wisdom, goodness, and blessedness. God dwells in light, and his countenance beams with paternal goodness, and paternal joy. He enlightens the hearts

of all good men, and illuminates their path. In their original darkness he sent them the first ray of light, in the night of affliction and death he sends into their hearts a beam of unceasing joy and hope. As God, he displayed his glory in the creation of light, as the father of the universe in irradiating with its beams the souls of men, and leading us onward from this twilight of existence to brighter habitations. Is there any created existence, that would better deserve to be the garment of Jehovah, who, as to the essence of his nature, dwells in eternal obscurity? Light is his swiftest messenger, winged almost with the pinions of his omnipresence, and the emblem of Divine purposes and joys.

A. The poetry of the Hebrews has consequently fine imagery drawn from this source.

E. Perhaps no poetry in the world has drawn from it with more beautiful effect. The very name of light has in this language a lofty and noble sound, the emblem of all that is joyous and transporting. While it paints darkness in images of fear and horror, it places in animating contrast, the bright eye of day, the eyelids of the opening dawn. All the pictures of the dawn associate with it the idea of waiting, of expectation, of desire, and its appearance brings fruition. The morning star, which we see before us, is here a fair son of the twilight; for like every thing else, light and darkness has each its palace, its peculiar and inaccessible dwelling. The dawn appears in Job as a hero, who scatters the bands of misdoers, deprives the robber of the covering of darkness that protects him, gives to all things their form, and stamps them, as it were, with a new impression of his seal. From the womb of the morning dawn, is born the dew, her numerous host of glittering children. See you not there the fair mother before you, in that beautiful blending of light and darkness? observe too, how the Eternal Father is gradually expanding and arching over us the tent of his azure heavens.

He sits above the circle of the earth,
 The inhabitants of the world are grasshoppers before him.
 He stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
 He spreadeth it out as a tent to dwell in.

But let us pass, if you please, to the mythology of the heavens themselves.

A. The Orientalists must have, I fear, great disputes to decide what Moses meant by his firmament between the waters and the waters. Whether it be a tent, an arched covering above, or a chrystal firmament on which the waters rested, it seems difficult to determine.

E. No disputes are necessary, for the pictures are all common, and, rightly understood, are also suitable and dignified. The most ancient idea is certainly not of a firmament or foundation of glass, since glass was unknown till a late period. The most ancient mythology represents the heavens, as an arch of water, and even the throne of God as begirt with darkness in the midst of the waters. In the celebrated song of David even it is said,

He stretcheth out the heavens as a tent,
 He placeth amid the waters the arch of this dwelling.
 He maketh the clouds his chariots,
 He goeth forth on the wings of the wind.

Even at this late period we see nothing of the chrystal firmament, but a tent, a sublime palace arched over with the waters of heaven. Such also is the tradition of the Arabians—God called forth the heavens from the waters, and formed them for a habitation. The beautiful correspondence with truth too, in these representations, considered as pictures of natural history, is matter of wonder.

A. I have always admired it, and also the descriptions of the clouds, of the lightning and the rain, as peculiarly beautiful. The drougthy Orientals, seem to look upon the heavens only as a store-house for their refreshments, a sup-

ply of the blessings, which their earth so often denied them.

E. And they have clothed this beautiful idea in a variety of imagery. At one time he binds up the waters in the clouds, as in leathern bags, and their airy tissue is not broken. In them is the water of life for man and beast. At another he drives them, filled with the stores of his bounty, hither and thither, to refresh the thirsty regions of the earth, and pours them out with a profusion, that overflows even the deserts, where no man dwells, nor blade of grass springs. He is often described, as going forth majestically in these waters, passing from land to land, for its relief, and treading upon the swelling floods of heaven. There he has his treasures of waters, and traces furrows in heaven, and opens channels, by which to conduct them. Again he rends asunder his tent, and lets the rain descend, divides the heavens, or opens the windows of his royal palace, and deluges the earth with torrents. The last were probably conceptions of a late period, when God was represented as the king of heaven.

A. And was he not so represented at an early period?

E. Whether early or not, he was still earlier represented as the father of a family, who extended his parental care to man and beast. Observe the numerous passages of this kind in the Psalms and prophets. What heartfelt prayer for rain and refreshing waters ascend to heaven! How do all eyes wait, and the parched tongue, now animated anew, abound in thanksgiving! The finest images of the bounty, the universal goodness, and providence of God are borrowed from the rain and the dew. So also the most earnest prayer and cordial longing after God, are represented under the image of burning and consuming thirst:

As the hart panteth for the fresh fountain,
So panteth my soul after thee,
My soul thirsteth for God,
For the living God.
When shall I come to him,
And behold his face?

Images of this kind give to poetry a community of feeling and sympathy between brute animals, men, plants, and all that has life ; the Supreme and Eternal Father, is the father of all.

A. But how then were the heavens represented as solid ?

E. It was on account of their sapphire appearance, their glowing splendour, their unchangeableness, and their beauty. Perhaps the most ancient notion was, that this solid firmament was ice, from which the hail descended. The Arabs have pictures, according to which the lightnings are but sparks, that fly off from the sapphire firmament. Finally, when the heavens came to be represented as a temple and palace of God, this pure azure of the sky was the ground floor of his, and the covering of our habitation. To those who dwelt in tents, however, the idea of a heavenly tent seems to me to have been the greatest favorite. They represent God as daily spreading it out, and making it fast to the mountains, the pillars of heaven. It is to them, an emblem of security, of rest, and of the paternal intercourse and friendship, in which God lives with his creatures.

A. And how do they treat the earth ?

E. You will learn from their own words, if you go on with the psalm, in which David has given a picture of the creation.

A.

He hath established the earth upon its foundation,
It shall not be moved for ever and ever.

He hath covered it with floods, as with a robe ;
The waters stood above the mountains ;

At thy rebuke they fled,
At the voice of thy thunders they hasted away.

Then rose up the mountains, the valleys sunk down,
To the place which thou didst appoint for them.

Thou settest boundaries to the floods,
They shall not pass over and return
To deluge the earth.

Thou sendest forth springs in the valleys,
 They run between the mountains,
 They give drink to the beasts of the field,
 The wild beasts quench their thirst.
 Above them dwell the fowls of heaven,
 They sing among the branches.

Thou waterest the hills from thy store-house above,
 From the fruits of thy works* thou satisfiest the earth,
 Makest grass to grow for cattle,
 And seed for the service of man,
 That he may bring forth bread from the earth,†
 And make his face to shine with plenty,
 Wine also that maketh glad the heart of man,
 And bread, that strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of God are full of sap,
 The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted,
 Where the birds build their nests,
 And the fir trees the house of the heron.
 The mountains he made for the wild goats,
 The rocks as a refuge for the conies.

E. With what a joyful expression that poet surveys the earth! It is a green mountain of Jehovah, which he has raised up from the waters; an Elysian field, which he has established above the seas for the habitation of his living multitudes. The series of images, which the poet has made use of, contain exactly the natural history of the earth. At first the waters stand above the mountains, at the command of God they shrink beneath. Now the mountains rise up, the valleys sink, as the waters rush through and level them. Finally God sets bounds to the floods, and makes fast the

* With the fruit of thy work, i. e. with the blessings which thou createst. God is represented as the father of a family, always busy and providing for the earth.

† The production of bread from the earth is referred not to God, but men. He has caused seed to grow for them, that they may sow it and procure themselves bread. I have transposed parts of the 14th and 15th verses, by which they acquire more symmetry, and even the words a better consonance and arrangement.

earth—Then the fountains break forth in the vallies, the streams run between the mountains, where their beds are already hollowed out ; to them the beasts resort, and above them the birds sing, for the banks of streams were first covered with trees. We shall find in Job more sublime pictures of the formation of the earth ; more true or beautiful are scarcely possible.

A. And in truth whatever is most consonant to nature is most perfect in beauty. What are all the mythologies to me, if they teach me nothing ? What profit do I gain, for example, when the Northern Edda represents heaven, as the skull of a slaughtered giant, the earth as formed from his bones, and the rivers from his blood ? Poetry, in order to affect the heart and the understanding, must combine beauty with truth, and animate both with sympathetick feeling.

E. The poetry of the Orientals seems to me to combine all these. What sympathy, for example, does it exhibit with flowers, plants and herbs ? As it ascribes to all in a certain degree the principles of life, and more than figuratively personifies them, so God is represented as their father, who bestows his blessings upon them, who nourishes them with rain, and serves them with the breath of spring. Their restoration and the renewal of their verdure was a beautiful emblem of the resurrection of the dead, as their preservation was a memorial of his universal providence. The leaves of plants seem to have been early remarked, and the palm tree, the cedar, the vine and the olive have furnished beautiful and sublime images to the poetry of the Hebrews—But this, alas ! is all which they have furnished. Had we more of their pastoral fables like that of Jotham, or of the class to which the Song of Solomon belongs, what fine poetry and personifications should we find in them ! Perhaps more beautiful and diversified, than the dialogue of our own poet between the rose and the zephyr, or those in the Persian between the rose and the nightingale, the wanderer and the turtle dove. As

it is we must content ourselves with a single collection of such songs, but one that breathes throughout the fragrance of the rose, and brings back the musical notes of the turtle ; I mean the Songs of Solomon. But the sun, my friend, is rising high.

A. Be not in haste. Point me rather to some examples of fine personification and hymns addressed to the sun. The Hebrews I believe have none of these.

E. Hymns addressed to these, or to any other object of nature, this poetry could not have. It would be idolatry, and you are aware how conscientiously this was avoided. Job says,

Had I looked at the sun, when it shone forth,
And the moon going abroad in its beauty,
So that my heart had burned in secret,
And I had kissed my hand for them,
This would have been an abomination,
For I should have denied the God of Heaven.

When this feeling was so sincere and earnest, no hymns to the hosts of heaven were possible. The Hebrew poetry guarded against this species of idolatry with the more extreme caution, because the Orientals in general were not so much attracted by any inferior idols, as by the king and queen of heaven, and to these their hearts were very greatly inclined. It became therefore a direct object of this poetry to represent the sun and moon as the servants of God, and to ascribe to him also all glory and truth, righteousness and beauty.

God said, Let there be two great lights in heaven
To rule over the seasons.
He placed them in the firmament
To have dominion over the seasons.

They are kings of the world, but only subordinate to God, his representatives, his creatures and messengers. In those characters alone the Hebrew poetry has employed them.

A. It has used them you mean but little ?

E. Yes, much and appropriately too. The sun, moon and stars also were animated. They had their dwelling places and tents in heaven, as they still have in the minds of the Arabians and other nations. You know the beautiful passage, for which you may seek a parallel among the Greeks in vain.

For the sun he hath pitched a tent in the heavens,
 From which he goeth forth as a bridegroom
 Out of his chamber,
 And rejoiceth as a hero
 In the career of victory.
 He goeth forth from the end of heaven,
 And goeth onward to the end of it,
 And filleth the world with his beams.

The moon and stars also have their dwellings, in which, when they are to be darkened, God seals them up, or in which they timidly shrink and hide themselves, when the glory of Jehovah appears. Thus in Habakkuk, for example, God comes forth in his war-chariot to conquer and divide the land; the sun and moon come in astonishment to the doors of their tents; his lightnings are shot forth, his arrows fly round him, and they hide themselves in confusion before the presence of his greater glory.

The mountains saw thee and trembled,
 The waters passed away,
 The deep uttered its voice,
 And lifted up its hands on high.
 The sun and moon stood still in their tents;
 When they saw the brightness of thine arrows,
 The glittering splendour of thy lightnings,
 They hasted away.

A more sublime personification I consider hardly possible. All nature listens; its swiftest objects stand still, its brightest are obscured. In the same spirit the stars are made the martial host, the exulting children of God.—Whatever is pure,

fair, and immortal, is compared with the stars, and the angels are often personified in them.

A. But for what purposes are these glittering hosts sent and employed ?

E. Those for which God employs his servants. The sun, as even its name indicates, is a messenger, but never the original fountain of blessedness and beauty. Even the nourishment of plants is not ascribed to it, but to the Supreme Father, who refreshes and waters them with the air, the dew, and the rain : it only brings about the seasons—a king of the earth, but in subordination to the King of kings. The stars as his army go out and engage in battle. To them were ascribed the water-spouts and the overflowing of rivers ; and in the song of Deborah they are beautifully personified in this character. In their character of angelick messengers they are capable of failure. He discovers them out of the way, and does not trust them with confidence. He finds imperfection in their brillianey, and the heavens are not pure in his sight. But finally, when the future days of his own peculiar reign shall arrive, then shall the sun shine with sevenfold brightness, and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun. That poetry, which so profoundly comprehends the nature of things ; which binds all the objects of creation together in such admirable order, and, in a sublime choral song which represents God as the great shepherd of heaven, who knows and calls for the stars by name as his sheep, and feeds them under a variety of images on the azure fields of the sky ; who girds Orion, and consoles the nightly wanderer for the loss of her children ; who binds together the seven stars in their sisterly union, and hides his secret treasures in the South ; such poetry is the daughter of heaven and earth. When we come to treat of the book of Job, what elevated views of the stars will it furnish us.

A. I anticipate it with delight, and am for ever reconciled to the most ancient poetry of the world. I have been particu-

larly, struck by its perfect sympathy with brutes, and the whole animate creation, and was delighted even in childhood to find, that it treated the brute animals (so called because they are dumb) as the brothers of man, who wanted nothing but the power of speech. The wild beasts it denominates living creatures, or the *living*, because the domestick animals are, in the comparison, as it were still and dead. I was delighted, when I found the voice and language of brutes so forcibly expressed in the language ; when the prophet coos with the crane and the turtle dove, and mourns with the ostrich in the wilderness. I rejoiced at finding the form of the stag, the lion, and the ox, sometimes their strength, stateliness, and velocity, at others, the acuteness of their senses, their habits of life, and their character described and painted in appropriate terms, and wished that in place of some of the sacred songs we had more of its fables, parables, riddles respecting the brute creation, in short, more of the poetry of nature ; for this seems to me to be among this people the most happy, and of the most perfect simplicity.

E. The name of God, however, must always belong to it, as a necessary accompaniment, for he is the parental head of this whole animate creation. He gives to every creature its food ;—all eyes wait upon him, and he lights them up with joy. The young and hateful raven does not cry unheard, and the wild chamois goat experiences his parental care, and is delivered in her time of need. He lives as it were with every animal in its peculiar sphere, feels its wants, and fulfills its wishes, because he has given to all their natures. To him nothing is wild, nothing dumb and despised. He roars with the lion after his prey, and looks down from his mountain eyry with the glance of the eagle. The wild ass lives upon his pastures, and the hawk flies by his wisdom. He too is the great deep, the realm of monsters. The hated crocodile is the object of his paternal love, and behemoth is the beginning of the ways of God, the most magnificent of his works on earth. In short,

this poetry is full of natural feeling, full of the universal providence and goodness of God in his wide empire. It was nourished in the bosom of nature, and cherished in the lap of our mother earth.

A. I now discover (what I have often wondered at with some perplexity) why it is, that in this poetry a reference is sometimes given to the brutes over men, and the ass of Balaam has more influence with the angel, than the prophet who rode her. In the book of Job, God is represented as delighting in the horse, and the lion, as being proud of behemoth and leviathan, but is silent respecting man.

E. It does not however pass over man with neglect ; he is the image of God, the masterpiece of his works, and one of the visible Elohim here upon the earth. But of this at another time. Finish now your song of praise, and I will close with one to correspond with it.

A.

He made the moon to divide the seasons,
The sun knoweth his going down.

Thou makest darkness, and it is night,
In which every beast of the forest creeps forth ;
The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their food from God.

The sun riseth, they hurry away,
And lay themselves down in their dens.
Then man goeth forth to his labour,
And to his work in the field until evening.

How manifold are thy works, O God,
In wisdom hast thou made them all ;
The earth is full of thy treasures.

The sea too, so vast, so wide in extent,
There are swarms innumerable,
Living things small and great.
There go the ships,
There sports the leviathan,
Which thou hast made to play therein.

These all wait on thee,
To give them meat in its season ;
Thou givest it them, they gather it ;

Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good.

Thou turnest away thy countenance,

They are filled with terror ;

Thou takest away their breath,

They return back to their dust ;

Thou sendest forth thy breath,

They are created anew,

And thou renewest the face of the earth.

The glory of Jehovah endureth for ever.

Jehovah rejoiceth in his works,

He looketh upon the earth, and it trembleth,

He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.

I will sing to Jehovah as long as I live, .

I will praise my God, while I have being.

My song of him shall be sweet,

I will be joyful in Jehovah.

Praise the Lord, O my soul,

Hallelujah.

E. I remain pledged for a corresponding specimen ; but since you prefer hymns, here is one entirely in the Oriental style. In my opinion there is indeed but one style in this class of poetry in all the living European languages, and that is the style of Job, the Prophets and the Psalms. Milton has especially interwoven it in the composition of his immortal poem. Thompson has trodden with feeble steps in the same path, and among us Kleist has very philosophically adorned it. For this style and this imagery we are indebted to the simplicity of the Hebrew poetry.*

* Reference is had in the last paragraph to Milton's morning Hymn of Adam in the 5th Book of Paradise Lost, which it is not thought necessary to copy in the translation. Tr.

DIALOGUE IV.

Transition to the book of Job. Best method of reading it. Descriptions of God, as judge of the stars, the creator of the world, the stiller of the tempest. Style and character of Elihu in his descriptions. Examples of his style. Discourse of God out of the tempest. Elucidation of its sublime pictures of nature. Of the poetry of nature in general. Whether it be a lifeless species of poetry, and undeserving of the name. Object of the poetry of nature. First means of attaining it, personification, animation. Examples from Job. Whether the most ancient times have an advantage over us in this respect, and why. Second requisite for this class of poetry, that it be the interpreter of nature. Examples from Job. Influence of the poetry of nature on the feelings. Third requisite, that it have an object and purpose. Illustrations from Job.

WHEN Euthyphron enquired for his friend, he found him reading the book of Job.

ALCIPHON. You see how your scholar is employed, and it is hardly necessary to say, that I am reading this book with delight. I cannot yet indeed accustom myself to the long speeches, the tedious complaints and claims to innocency, and still less the vindications of Providence, which cannot themselves be vindicated. Of the guiding thread of the dialogue, I yet know nothing. But the descriptions of nature in it, the sublime and yet simple account of the attributes of God, and his government of the world, elevate the soul. If you are inclined to listen then, I will (as these people say) open the treasures of my heart, and read a few passages to you. I leave it to you afterwards to set me in the right way in regard to the plan, the antiquity and author of the book.

EUTHYPHRON. It is a very proper course for you to begin in that way of selecting particular passages. To read the

work continuously is for us perhaps too strong meat. We are accustomed to prefer brevity in the dialogue, and a more obvious sequence of ideas, than we find here. The Orientals in their social intercourse heard each other quietly through, and were even fond of prolonged discourses, especially in verse. They are pearls from the depths of the ocean loosely arranged, but precious: treasures of knowledge and wisdom in sayings of the olden times.

A. But of what time? One must be surprised to find here so much intelligence, and furnished so abundantly with unperverted impressions and ideas of nature; and yet again there are other ideas so poor, so childlike.

E. Pass over, if you please, the consideration of time and authorship, and confine yourself to the work, as it is, in its poverty and its richness. Beyond all contradiction the book is from very ancient times, and I take it up whenever I venture to decypher its thoughts, with a species of reverence. My thoughts are carried to distant countries and remote ages, the ruins of the great revolutions that have taken place as well in matters of taste, as in the governments of the world. I listen to a voice that comes to me from a distance, perhaps of three or four thousand years, and instead of sitting in judgment on the book, or bringing it to the test of my own times, I say to myself in the words of the book itself,

We are of yesterday, and know nothing,
Our life on earth is but a shadow.
The fathers, they shall teach and tell us.
They give us the language of their hearts.

Proceed then with its beautiful descriptions of God and nature. My ear is open, and listens with attention to the ideas of the most ancient of the infant world.

A.

Power and its terrors are his,
He is arbiter in the heights of heaven.

Are not his hosts without number,
 And his light prevails over all ?
 Shall man then be just before God ?
 One born of woman be pure ?
 Behold even the moon abides not with its tent,
 Tho stars are not pure in his eyes.
 And shall man, who is a worm, be pure ?
 A child of earth, a worm !

E. A sublime representation of God, the Supreme Judge of heaven ! the arbiter among the stars and angels. His glittering hosts are numberless, his splendour obscures them all ; his lights, his purity, the truth and justice of his judicial decree puts them to silence. The moon with its tent disappears, the stars are impure in his sight. Then from these bright eminences we glance at man, and ask,

Shall man, who is a worm, be pure ?
 A child of earth, a worm !

A. Your explanation of the obscure words, “ He maketh peace among his heights, over whom doth not his light arise ? The moon pitcheth not her tent before him,” pleases me much. I see the Eastern judge, who decides between angels and stars. How finely and poetically too is the darkened moon introduced. Its tent is gone from heaven, it has concealed itself from the presence of its judge.

E. Proceed to the remarks of Job ; they are better still.

A.

Whom helpest thou ? him who hath no strength ?
 Whom dost thou vindicate ? whose arm hath no power ?
 To whom give counsel ? one without wisdom ?
 Truly much wisdom hast thou taught him !
 To whom dost thou give knowledge by words ?
 And whose breath dost thou breathe ?

E. To whom do you suppose this passage to relate ?

A. It seems to me to refer to God. Job means to say,

that God needs not to be vindicated by him, that his very breath is the breath of God, and that a helpless creature cannot become the defender of his Crèator.

E. Proceed, I shall not again interrupt you.

A.

The shades are moved from beneath,
The abyss, and those that dwell in it.
The realms of darkness are naked before him,
And uncreated night without a covering.
Over the wasteful deep he spreadeth out the heavens,
He hangeth up the earth upon nothing;
He bindeth up the waters in his clouds,
And the clouds are not rent under them.
He closeth up his throne round about,
He spreadeth the clouds around him.
He appointeth a boundary for the waters,
To where the light is ended in darkness.
The pillars of heaven tremble,
They are shaken at his reproof.
By his power he scourgeth the sea,
By his wisdom he bindeth its pride.
By his breath he garnisheth the heavens,
His hand seizeth the fleeing serpent.

Lo these are a part of his ways,
A whisper that we have heard of him;
But the thunders of his power,
Who can comprehend?

E. A splendid passage, and, as you are turned poet, I will become your commentator. Job surpasses these opponents in the excellence of his effusions, as much as he has the advantage of them in the result of their contest. He paints only a single representation of the power and majesty of God, but he draws his image from the deepest abyss, and carries his picture to the highest point of sublimity. The realms of non-existence are spread before the Almighty, the boundless depth of vacancy stretch beneath him; and as these were conceived, as we have before seen, under the form of a rest-

less ocean, he represents this, the vast realm of ancient night and unborn ages, as appearing before the Almighty, unveiling its wild abyss, and the horrid commotion of its billows. The shades tremble, the shapeless forms of future being are moved with expectation, the abyss, which never before saw the light, is without a covering. Now begins the work of creation. He spreads out the heavens over this dark and boundless deep ; he establishes the earth and causes it to rest, and as it were to be suspended over nothingness and vacancy. (For these realms of night and of the shades were supposed to be subterraneous.) Now he arranges the heaven in order, binds up the waters in clouds, and forms for himself the open expanse ; builds and adorns his throne, in the midst of the waters ; encloses it around, and spreads the thick clouds as a carpet beneath it. Then he measures and designates the boundaries of the watery heavens to where the light and darkness mingle, that is, to the extremity of the horizon. Next his power is exhibited in the thunder, and still more to magnify the effect, in a storm at sea. The waves are represented as rebels, whom he drives before him, and can in a moment bind in chains. A single breath from him, and the sea is calm, the heavens clear ; his hand meets only with the flying serpent (either according to an image occurring in other passages—Ps. lxxiv. 13. Is. xxvii. 1)—the monsters of the deep in the neighbouring seas, as the crocodile, or perhaps the flying and curling waves themselves, which his hand smooths and levels. Either way the picture closes with a stillness as sublime and beautiful, as the tumult, with which it commenced, was terrific. And these, says Job, are but a single sound, a small part of his wonders.

The thunders of his power, who can comprehend them ?

Every morning, as day breaks from the darkness of night, every storm, especially at sea, brings the magnificent picture before us. Have you any other passage ?

A. Take, if you please, the laudatory hymn of the inspired Elihu, immediately preceding the final and magnificent response of the Divine Being.

E. Observe however by the way, that it stands there only as a foil to increase the effect of that response. Much as Elihu thinks, and finely as he speaks, he is still, as he himself says, but new and fermenting wine, that rends and escapes from the bottles. He has splendid images, but directs them to no end; and the finest of them are only amplifications of those, which Job and his friends had employed in a more concise form. Hence no answer is returned to him. He prepares the way for the entrance of the Divine Being, and proclaims it without himself being aware of it. In describing a rising tempest in all its phenomena he paints, without knowing it, the coming of the judge.

A. I had never remarked this prospective design in the progress of the picture.

E. It is however, as I think, the soul of the whole, without which, all that Elihu says would be mere tautology. As the passage is too long to be taken entire, begin at the words "Lo! God is great."—I will occasionally alternate with you.

A.

Lo, God is mighty in his power,
Where is a teacher like him?
Who shall try his ways?
And who shall say thou hast erred?
Consider and praise his doings,
For all men celebrate them,
And all men behold them,
But weak man sees them from far.

Lo, God is great, and we know it not,
The number of his years is unsearchable.
He draweth up the drops of water,
Rains are exhaled upwards in vapour;
The clouds pour them down again,
They drop upon men abundantly.

Who can understand the outspreading of his clouds,
And the fearful thunderings in his tent ?
Behold, he encompasseth it with lightnings,
And covereth with floods the depths of the sea.
By these he executeth judgment upon the people,
And giveth also their food abundantly.

With his hands he holdeth the lightnings,
And commandeth them where they shall strike.
He pointeth out to them the wicked ;
The evil-doer is the prey of his wrath.

E. All these images will occur in a more concise and beautiful form in the language of God, that follows.—The tempest is now rising upon them, and Elihu proceeds—

Therefore my heart is terrified,
And leaps from its place with alarm.
Hear ye ! O hear with trembling his voice,
The word, that goeth out of his mouth.
It goeth abroad under the whole heaven,
And his lightning to the ends of the earth.
Behind him sound aloud his thunders,
He uttereth the voice of his majesty,
And we cannot explore his thunderings.
God thundereth marvellously with his voice,
He doeth wonders, which we cannot comprehend.
He saith to the snow, be thou upon the earth,
To the dropping shower, and the outpouring of his might ;
So that all men acknowledge his work.

A. In the last words I like better the interpretation—He puts the seal upon the hand of every man, that is, they stand astounded and amazed, feeling, that they are powerless—a feeling, that every thunder-shower awakens in us.

E. The terrors of the storm are farther described.

The wild beast fleeth to his cave,
He cowers himself down in his den.
Now cometh the whirlwind from the South,

And from the North cometh the frost ;
 The breath of God goeth forth, there is ice,
 And the broad sea is made firm.
 And now his brightness rendeth the clouds,
 His light scattereth the clouds afar.
 They wheel about in their course as he willeth,
 They go to accomplish his commands
 Upon all the face of the earth.

We must be Orientals in order to estimate the good effects of rain, and to paint with such careful observation, the features and the course of the clouds.—It is obviously a present scene, which Elihu is describing in what follows—

Attend ! O Job, and hear this,
 Stand and consider the wonders of God.
 Knowest thou how God disposeth them,
 How he kindleth up the light of his clouds ?
 Knowest thou how the clouds are swayed—
 The marvellous doings of the all-wise ?
 How thy garments become warm to thee,
 When he warmeth the earth from the South
 Hast thou with him spread out the firmament,
 That stands strong and like a molten mirror ?
 Teach us what we shall say to him,
 We cannot speak by reason of darkness.
 Shall it be told to him when I speak ?
 Let one open his mouth—Lo ! he is gone,
 His light is no longer beheld.
 His splendour is behind the clouds ;
 The wind passeth, and they are dispersed.
 Now cometh the gold from the North,
 The fear-awakening glory of Eloah.
 As for the Almighty, we cannot find him,
 The great, the powerful judge,
 Unspeakable in righteousness.
 Therefore do men reverence him,
 The wisest behold him not.

E. The consequence of the young pretender's forwardness you perceive is, that he shows that to be impossible, which

in the face of his declaration is on the point of taking place. At the moment, when he is convincing himself, that the darkness of the clouds is a perpetual barrier between men and God, and that no mortal shall ever hear the voice of the Eternal, God appears and speaks—and how vast the difference between the words of Jehovah and the language of Elihu! It is but the feeble, prolix babbling of a child, in comparison with the brief and majestick tones of thunder, in which the Creator speaks.—He disputes not, but produces a succession of living pictures, surrounds, astonishes, and overwhelms the faculties of Job with the objects of his inanimate and animated creation.

A. Jehovah spake to Job from out of the tempest, and said to him,

Who is it, that darkeneth the counsels of God
By words without knowledge?
Gird up thy loins like a man;
I will ask thee, teach thou me.
Where wast thou,
When I founded the earth?
Tell me, if thou knowest.
Who fixed the measure of it? dost thou know?
Who stretched the line upon it?
Whereon stand its deep foundations?
Who laid the corner-stone thereof,
When the morning stars sang in chorus
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

E. We forget the geology and all the physics of more modern times, and contemplate these images, as the ancient poetry of nature respecting the earth. Like a house it has its foundations laid, its dimensions are fixed, and the line is stretched upon it: and, when its foundations are sunk, and its corner-stone is laid in its place, all the children of God, the morning stars, his elder offspring, chant a song of joy to the great architect and the glad welcoming of their younger sister. Next follows the birth of the sea.

A.

Who wrapped up the sea in swaddling clothes
 When it broke forth from the mother's womb ?
 I gave it the clouds for garments,
 I swathed it in mists and darkness,
 I fixed my decrees upon it,
 And placed them for gates and bars.
 I said thus far shalt thou come, and no farther,
 Here shalt thou dash thy stormy waves.

E. I do not believe, that this object was ever represented under a bolder figure, than that, by which it is here expressed, of an infant, which the Creator of the world swathes and clothes with its appropriate garments. It bursts forth from the clefts of the earth, as from the womb of its mother, the ruler and director of all things addresses it as a living being, as a young giant exulting in his subduing power, and with a word the sea is hushed, and obeys him for ever.

A.

Hast thou in thy lifetime commanded the dawn ?
 And taught the day-spring to know its place,
 That it seize on the far corners of the earth,
 And scatter the robbers before it ?
 Like clay the form of things is changed by it,
 They stand forth, as if clothed with ornament.
 From the wicked their light is taken away,
 Their haughty arm is broken.

E. It is unfortunate, that we cannot more clearly represent the dawn, as a watchman, a messenger of the Prince of heaven, sent to chase away the bands of robbers—how different the office from that, which the Western nations assigned to their Aurora ! It points us to ancient times of violence, when terror and robbery anticipated the dawn.*

A.

Hast thou entered into the caverns of the sea ?

* It is still the custom of the Arabs to go out on plundering excursions before dawn.

Hast thou explored the hollow depths of the abyss ?
 Have the gates of death opened for thee ?
 And hast thou seen the doors of non-existence ?
 Is thy knowledge as broad as the earth ?
 Show me, if thou knowest it all.
 Where dwelleth the light ? where is the way to it ?
 And the darkness, where is its place ?
 That thou mayest reach even the limits thereof,
 For thou knowest the path to its house,
 Thou knowest, for thou wast already born,
 And the number of thy days is great.

E. Every thing here is personified, the light, the darkness, death and nothingness. These have their palaces with bars and gates, those their houses, their kingdoms and boundaries. The whole is a poetical world and a poetical geography.

A.

Hast thou been into the store-house of the snow ?
 And seen the treasury of the hail,
 Which I have laid up for the time of need,
 For the day of war and of slaughter ?

E. A vein of irony runs through the whole passage. God fears the attack of his enemies, and has furnished and secured his vaulted treasury of hail as the armoury of war. In the clouds too, as well as in the abyss, every thing breathes of poetry.

A.

Where doth the light divide itself,
 When the East wind streweth it upon the earth ?
 Who divided the water courses of heaven ?
 And traced a path for the storms of thunder ?
 To bring rain upon lands, where no man dwelleth,
 Upon deserts, which no man inhabiteth,
 To refresh the wilderness, and the barren place,
 And cause the tender herb to spring forth.
 Who is the father of the rain ?
 The drops of dew, who hath generated them ?
 From whose womb came forth the ice ;

The hoar-frost of heaven, who gave it birth ?
 The waters hide themselves and become as stone,
 The surface of the abyss is confined as in chains.

E. Rich and exquisite pictures both of the heavens and the earth ! Above, the fountains of light gush forth, and the East wind scatters it over the countries of the earth, the paternal ruler of the heavens traces channels for the rain, and marks out their paths for the clouds. Beneath, the water becomes a rock, and the waves of the sea are chained with ice. Even the rain, the dew and the hoar-frost have their father and their mother.—And then follows one of the most beautiful and sublime views of the Universe—

A.

Canst thou bind together the brilliant Pleiades ?
 Or canst thou loose the bands of Orion ?
 Canst thou bring the stars of the Zodiack in their season ?
 And lead forth the Bear with her young ?
 Knowest thou the laws of the heavens above ?
 Or hast thou given a decree to the earth beneath ?
 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,
 And enter into them clothed with floods ?
 Canst thou send the lightnings, that they shall go,
 And say to thee, "here are we ?"
 Who gave understanding to the flying clouds ?
 Or intelligence to the meteors of the air ?
 Who by his wisdom hath numbered the drops of rain ?
 Hath sent down the gentle showers from heaven,
 And watered the dust, that it might unite,
 And the clods of the earth cleave together ?

E. The description of the so called inanimate creation is here ended. But in the description no part of creation is without life. The stars, that joyously usher in the spring, are bound together in a sisterly union. Orion (or whatever constellation Chesil may be) is a man girded for action, and is the pioneer of winter. The constellations of the Zodiack rise in gradual succession like a wreath encircling the earth.

The Father the of heavens lets the Bear with her young feed around the North pole ; or (in accordance with another mythology and interpretation) the nightly wanderer, a mother of the stars, who is seeking her lost children, the stars, that are no longer visible, is the object of his consolation (perhaps effected by bringing forth to her view new stars in place of those that were lost.) One who by night observes the Bear in its course as if feeding with its young on the fields of the sky or the Zodiack, that, like a girdle with its beautifully embroidered figures, encompasses the earth, and rises gradually to view with the revolving seasons, and then reflects upon the times, when the nightly shepherds under an Oriental sky had these images continually before them and in accordance with the fancy and feeling, that belong to a shepherd's life, ascribed to them animated being and form—one, who does this, I say, will perceive at once the starry brilliance and beauty of this passage, although, as to its conciseness and symmetry, and the connexion of its parts, it can be but imperfectly translated. It is the same also with the passage, in which God is represented, as giving understanding to the darkness, to the roving clouds, and meteors. The personifications both of feeling and of form in poetry vanish in another language. Yet all these images, the sending out of the lightnings, and their reply, the going forth of God among the clouds, his numbering of the drops of rain, their gentle but copious descent at his command, are in the style of the most beautiful descriptive poetry.

A. You seem to be an admirer of this whole species of poetry—and yet our critics hold it to be the most barren and inanimate in the whole compass of the art. Some indeed will not even accord to it the name of poetry, and denominate it a heartless description of things and forms, that are indescribable.

E. If such be the fact, I agree with all my heart, that it does not deserve the name of poetry. Those miserable wri-

ters, who describe to us the spring, the rose, the thunder, the ice, and the winter, in a tedious and unaffecting style, are neither good in poetry, nor in prose. The true poetry of nature has something else, than a dull description of individual traits, to which in fact it is not principally devoted.

A. And what has it in the place of it ?

E. Poetry. It makes the objects of nature to become things of life, and exhibits them in a state of living action. Look at Job. Here the earth is a palace, of which the builder laid the corner-stone, while all the children of God shouted for joy at the event. The ocean was born and wrapt in garments, like a child. The dawn is an active agent, and the lightning speaks. The personification is kept up, and carried through with consistency, and this gives to poetry its animation. The soul is hurried forward, and feels itself in the midst of the objects described, while it is a witness of their agencies. Tedious descriptions, on the other hand, disjoin them, and paralyze their powers. They exhibit but a tattered dress of words, abstracted and partial shadows of forms, where in true poetry we see actual and living beings.

A. But who, my friend, could venture to write poetry in the style of the Orientals ? to present the ocean as a child in swaddling clothes, the arsenals of snow and hail, and channels for water in the heavens ?

E. No one should do it. For every language, every nation, every climate has its own measure in matters of taste, and the peculiar sources of its favourite poetry. It shows a lamentable poverty to attempt to borrow from a people so diverse, yet we must adopt the same principles, and create out of the same material. He, to whose eyes and heart nature has no life, to whose apprehension it neither speaks, nor acts, was not born to be its poet. It stands lifeless before him, and it will still be lifeless in his writing.

A. It follows then, that the ages of ignorance had great advantages over those, in which nature is studied, and becomes

the object of knowledge. They had poetry—we have only description.

E. What call you the ages of ignorance? All sensuous tribes have a knowledge of that nature, to which their poetry relates; nay, they have a more living, and for their purpose a better knowledge of it, than the Linnæan classifier from his bookish arrangement. For a general knowledge of species this method is necessary, but to make it the foundation of poetry would be about as wise, as to write it out of Habner's rhyming dictionary. For myself I admire those times, when man's knowledge of nature was perhaps less extended, but was a living knowledge, when the eye was rendered discriminating by impassioned feeling, when analogies to what is human struck the view, and awakened feelings of astonishment.

A. It were to be wished then, that the times, in which those feelings prevailed, were again experienced.

E. Every age must make its poetry consistent with its ideas of the great system of being, or if not, must at least be assured of producing a greater effect by its poetical fictions, than systematick truth could secure to it. And may not this often be the case? I have no doubt, that from the systems of Copernicus and Newton, of Buffon and Priestley, as elevated poetry may be made, as from the most simple and child-like views of nature. But why have we no such poetry? Why is it, that the simple pathetic fables of ancient or unlearned tribes always affect us more, than these mathematical, physical, and metaphysical niceties? Is it not because the people of those times wrote poetry with more lively apprehensions, because they conceived ideas of all things, including God himself, under analogous forms, reduced the universe to the shape of a house, and animated all that it contains with human passions, with love and hatred? The first poet, who can do the same in the universe of Buffon and Newton, will, if he is so disposed, produce with truer, at least with more comprehensive ideas, the effect which they accomplish-

ed with their limited analogies and poetic fables. Would that such a poet were already among us, but so long as that is not the case, let us not turn to ridicule the genuine beauties in the poetry of ancient nations, because they understood not our systems of natural philosophy and metaphysics. Many of their allegories and personifications contain more imaginative power, and more sensuous truth, than voluminous systems—and the power of touching the heart speaks for itself.

A. This power of producing emotion, however, seems to me not to belong in so high a degree to the poetry of nature.

E. The more gentle and enduring sentiments of poetry at least are produced by it, and more even than by any other. Can there be any more beautiful poetry, than God himself has exhibited to us in the works of creation? poetry, which He spreads fresh and glowing before us with every revolution of days and of seasons? Can the language of poetry accomplish any thing more affecting, than with brevity and simplicity to unfold to us in its measure what we are and what we enjoy? We live and have our being in this vast temple of God; our feelings and thoughts, our sufferings and our joys are all from this as their source. A species of poetry that furnishes me with eyes to perceive and contemplate the works of creation and myself, to consider them in their order and relation, and to discover through all the traces of infinite love, wisdom, and power, to shape the whole with the eye of fancy, and in words suited to their purpose—such a poetry is holy and heavenly. What wretch, in the greatest tumult of his passions, in walking under a starry heaven, would not experience imperceptibly and even against his will a soothing influence from the elevating contemplation of its silent, unchangeable, and everlasting splendours. Suppose at such a moment there occurs to his thoughts the simple language of God, “Canst thou bind together the bairds of the Pleiades,” &c.—is it not as if God himself addressed the words to him

from the starry firmament ? Such an effect has the true poetry of nature, the fair interpreter of the nature of God. A hint, a single word, in the spirit of such poetry, often suggests to the mind extended scenes ; nor does it merely bring their quiet pictures before the eye in their outward lineaments, but brings them home to the sympathies of the heart, especially, when the heart of the poet himself is tender and benevolent, and it can hardly fail to be so.

A. Will the heart of the poet of nature always exhibit this character ?

E. Of the great and genuine poet undoubtedly, otherwise he may be an acute observer, but could not be a refined and powerful expositor of nature. Poetry, that concerns itself with the deeds of men, often in a high degree debasing and criminal, that labours, with lively and affecting apprehensions, in the impure recesses of the heart, and often for no very worthy purpose, may corrupt as well the author as the reader. The poetry of divine things can never do this. It enlarges the heart, while it expands the view, renders this serene and contemplative, that energetic, free, and joyous. It awakens a love, an interest, and a sympathy for all that lives. It accustoms the understanding to remark on all occasions the laws of nature, and guides our reason to the right path. This is especially true of the descriptive poetry of the Orientals.

A. Do you apply the remark to the chapter of Job, of which we were speaking ?

E. Certainly. It would be childish to hunt for the system of physics implied in the individual representations of poetry, or to aim at reconciling it with the system of our own days, and thus show that Job had already learned to think like our natural philosophers ; yet the leading idea, that the universe is the palace of the Divine Being, where he is himself the director and disposer, where every thing is transacted according to unchangeable and eternal laws, with a providence, that continually extends to the minutest concern, with be-

benevolence and judgment—this, I say, we must acknowledge to be great and ennobling. It is set forth too, by examples, in which every thing manifests unity of purpose, and subordination to the combined whole. The most wonderful phenomena come before us, as the doings of an ever active and provident father of his household. Show me a poem, which exhibits our system of physics, our discoveries and opinions respecting the formation of the world, and the changes that it undergoes, under as concise images, as animated personifications, with as suitable expositions, and a plan comprising as much unity and variety for the production of effect. But do not forget the three leading qualities, of which I have spoken, animation in the objects for awakening the senses, interpretation of nature for the heart, a plan in the poem, as there is in creation, for the understanding. The last requisite altogether fails in most of our descriptive poets.

A. You require, I fear, what is impossible. How little plan are we able to comprehend in the scenes of nature? The kingdom of the all-powerful mother of all things is so vast, her progress so slow, her prospective views so endless—

E. That therefore a human poem must be so vast, so slow in progress, and so incomprehensible? Let him, to whom nature exhibits no plan, no unity of purpose, hold his peace, nor venture to give her expression in the language of poetry. Let him speak, for whom she has removed the veil, and displayed the true expression of her features. He will discover in all her works connexion, order, benevolence, and purpose. His own poetical creation too, like that creation which inspires his imagination, will be a true *κρῶσις*, a regular work, with plan, outlines, meaning, and ultimate design, and commend itself to the understanding as a whole, as it does to the heart by its individual thoughts and interpretations of nature, and to the sense by the animation of its objects. In nature, all things are connected, and for the view of man are connected by their relation to what is human. The periods of time,

as days and years, have their relation to the age of man. Countries and climates have a principle of unity in the one race of man, ages and worlds in the one eternal cause, one God, one Creator. He is the eye of the universe, giving expression to its otherwise boundless void, and combining in a harmonious union the expression of all its multiplied and multifiform features. Here we are brought back again to the East, for the Orientals, in their descriptive poetry, however poor or rich it may be judged, secure, first of all, that unity, which the understanding demands. In all the various departments of nature they behold the God of the heavens and of the earth. This no Greek, nor Celt, nor Roman has ever done, and how far in this respect is Lucretius behind Job and David!

DIALOGUE V.

Descriptions of the animate creation in Job. Leading traits of his imagery. Where Job lived. Whether in the valley of Gutah near Damascus. Grounds for considering the proverbs of this book as the wise sayings, or the philosophy, of the children of Edom. Egyptian imagery in the book. Whether the author of it was an Egyptian. What extent and variety its imagery embraces. Whether behemoth be the elephant, or the hippopotamus. Whether Moses wrote the book, translated it from the Arabic, or found it with Jethro. When it was brought to Judaea. Whether it was imitated in the poetry of the Hebrews. Whether the historical introduction is as ancient as the book itself. Whether the Satan of this book is a conception of Chaldee origin. Of the juridical forms, under which Job represents objects both in heaven and on earth. Plan of the book, as a judicial process, and a wit-combat. Whether the friends of Job are distinctively characterized. Whether their several discourses, as put together, exhibit a connected train of thought. That the book is no drama in successive acts, but a consessus of wise men after the manner of the East. Whether it is founded on historical facts. Its poetical style and composition. Appendix.

ALCIPHON. I am eager to proceed to the second part of God's address to Job. In this we shall find the brute forms also not only animated, but all become ensouled with human feelings. I will read, and then wait for your interpretation.

The king of beasts is the first to advance.

Dost thou hunt for the lion his prey?

The hunger of the young lions dost thou satisfy,

When they lie in wait in their dens,

And crouch under covert in ambush?

Who provideth for the raven his food,

When his young cry unto God,

And wander for lack of meat?

Dost thou know when the chamois-goat brings forth?

And mark the birth-throes of the hind ?
 Dost thou number the months they fulfil,
 And know the period of their bringing forth ?
 They bow themselves, and give birth to their young,
 They cast forth the offspring of their pains.
 Their young ones increase in strength ;
 They grow up in the wilderness ;
 They go from them, and return no more.

EUTHYPHRON. The terrific cruelty of the lion, the hatefulness of the young raven, for which yet God provides, and its hoarse cry of distress, here so briefly described, all speak for themselves. The paternal tenderness of God also, with which he regards and provides for the wild chamois of the rock, we have already remarked. Observe now, moreover, the recompense with which God rewards her pains. " Her young soon grow up, and no longer demand her care." In regard to other animals also, we find notice of this fatherly feeling, with which God spares them and compensates the evils of their condition. The following is an example.

A.

Who sent forth the wild ass free,
 And broke for him his slavish bonds ?
 The wilderness have I made an house for him,
 And the barren desert his dwelling.
 He scoffs at the uproar of the city ;
 The cry of the driver, he heedeth it not.
 He spieth out in the mountains his pasture ;
 He searcheth after every green thing.

E. With how true a feeling of liberty is the nature of this timid animal described. The unfruitful desert is its dwelling place ; and this it bartereth not for the noise of the city, nor will listen, like its enslaved brother, to the driver's voice. It looks away rather to the green herbage of the mountains, and spies out the smallest blade of grass. It lives in the wilderness unoppressed, free, and joyous.

A.

Will the buffalo be willing to serve thee,

And abide through the night at thy crib?
 Wilt thou bind him with his band in the furrow,
 And will he harrow the valleys after thee?
 Wilt thou trust him, because he is strong,
 And commit unto him thy labour?
 Believest thou in him, that he will gather thy harvest,
 And that thy threshing floor shall be filled?

E. The wild and tame ox are here contrasted with each other, and the former will not perform the work of the latter. In short, every creature is fashioned for its own ends, and lives and finds enjoyment after its own way. But the three finest descriptions are yet to come, those of the ostrich, the horse and the eagle; and they close magnificently these pictures of the brute creation.

A.

A wing with joyous cry is uplifted yonder;
 Is it the wing and feather of the ostrich?
 When she commits her eggs to the earth,
 And leaves them to be warmed on the sand,
 She heeds it not, that the foot may crush them,
 And the wild beast trample upon them.
 She casts off her young for none of hers;
 In vain is her travail, but she regards it not;
 For God hath made her forgetful of wisdom,
 And hath not imparted to her reflection.
 At once she is up, and urges herself forward,
 She laughs at the horse and his rider.

Hast thou given the horse his strength,
 And clothed his neck with its flowing mane?
 Dost thou make him leap like the locust?
 The pomp of his neighing is terrible;
 He paweth the earth and joyeth in his strength,
 When he goeth against the weapons of war.
 He scoffeth at fear, and is nothing daunted,
 And turneth not back from facing the sword.
 Above him is the rattling of the quiver,
 The lightning of the spear and the lance.
 With vehemence and rage he devoureth the ground,
 And believeth not that the trumpet is sounding.

The trumpet sounds louder ; he cries—aha !
 And from far he snuffeth the slaughter,
 The war-cry of the captains, and the shout of battle.

Is it by thy understanding that the hawk flieth,
 And spreadeth his wings to the south wind ?
 Is it at thy word, that the eagle is lifted up,
 And buildeth his nest on high ?
 He inhabiteth the rock, and all night is there,
 High upon the cliff, his rocky fortress.
 From this he spicth out his prey,
 His eye searcheth it out from afar.
 His young ones are greedy of blood,
 And where the carcasses are there is he.

E. Mark now the peculiar boldness of these three descriptions. The ostrich, on its first rising to the view, is sketched with an expression of eagerness and exultation. Such is the feeling of surprise and wonder too, that the name is at first forgotten, and it presents itself to the sight, as a winged giant, exulting in the race and shouting for joy. What is stupid forgetfulness in the bird, appears as the wisdom of the Creator, by which he has kindly adapted it to its shy and timid life in the desert. Had it more consideration and tenderness, it would mourn for its abandoned young ; and hence God has denied it understanding, but given it its wild cry of joy, and its winged speed in the race. The description of the horse is perhaps the noblest, which has ever been given of this animal, as the region also, in which the book was written, produces the noblest of horses. It is here, as the Arabians regard it, an intelligent, brave, war-like animal, that partakes in the exultation of victory, and by its loud neighing joins in the battle-cry of heroes. Last comes the eagle with its upward flight and sovereign eye. His royal tower, his sanguinary propensities, and his piratical omnipresence also are truly marked, and he closes the list as king of the feathered tribes, as it was begun with the lion, the sovereign of another kingdom in the brute creation. Behemoth and leviathan, the monsters of the watery world, are still to follow.

A. These I will peruse by myself; and instead of dwelling upon them at present, explain to me rather the general sense, the aim of introducing these pictures, the connecting thread of discourse through the book, and as far as may be, also, the time and place, in which the author lived.

E. So you venture to enquire also, where the author lived. But how can we know this, if we know not the author himself? The enquiry must clearly depend for its result upon another, namely, where is the scene of the book laid,—where did Job dwell? If the historical introduction prefixed to the poetical part of the book is ancient and worthy of credit, (and it is certainly something more than a newly invented story), he dwelt in the land of Uz. But where was this land of Uz?

A. It must have been the delightful valley of Gubah around Damascus.

E. On this supposition, however, the introduction of the book is at variance with the book itself; for here, obviously, we meet with no Syrian, but with Arabian and Egyptian scenes. In all its poetical imagery there is no picture which is distinctively Syrian, though that country is so rich in natural scenery peculiarly its own. We must then give up this place, whose claim is founded upon a resemblance of its name alone, and that probably given at a later period, and look into the Hebrew writings for ourselves. Do you know of no other Uz besides this little colony from Damascus? Read Genesis, xxxvi. 28.

A. So one of the children of Edom had this name also.

E. And where does Jeremiah place the daughter of Edom*?

A. "Oh daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz."

E. Nothing can be plainer. And whence came the friends,

* Lam. iv. 21.

who visited Job, and who lived in his neighbourhood? In the books of Moses even, we find both Eliphaz and Teman among the sons of Esau. In many passages of the prophets* Teman is referred to as a country or city of Edom, distinguished for prudent counsels and wise sentences, just as we find it represented in the character of Eliphaz. Bildad of Shuah, Zophar of Naamah, and Elihu of Buz are all from places in or near Idumæa. Shuah was a near relative of Dedan,† and Dedan dwelt on the borders of Idumæa. The other cities named were in the same region; and in general, the manners and customs represented in the book are Idumæan, Arabian.

A. Can there have been at that early period such a degree of intellectual cultivation in Idumæa?

E. If not, the poet is at fault in his introduction, in fixing the scene of his poem without regard to the proprieties of time and place; but of this, I am disposed to believe, he knew better than we do. Were it left wholly to us, we should probably deny the representations of the book, and say, that, in times so ancient and regions so uncultivated, such wisdom and such accurate knowledge of nature could never have existed. Yet several of the prophets were clearly of a different opinion.

A. Which of the prophets?

E. Those who in their own time, when Edom had been often subdued and placed under the yoke, still treated it as the classic land of Oriental, that is, Arabick wisdom. The prudent men of Teman, and the wise men of Edom seem to have been proverbially spoken of.‡ Now we know in what this Oriental or Arabick wisdom consisted. It was made up of poetry, proverbs, lofty figurative representations and riddles, as this book represents it. It gives evidence in itself of the region, to which it belongs, for the scene and the whole cos-

* Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. viii. 9. † Gen. xxv. 2. 3. Jer. xlix. 8. Ezek. xxv. 13. ‡ Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. viii. 9.

tume are entirely Idumaæn. Job is an Eastern Emir, as his friends probably were also, and of the same character with the princes of Edom mentioned in the books of Moses. Jordan occurs in the book, as the name of a river. It nowhere recognizes the laws of Moses, or contains any allusion to them; and though it abounds in ideas pertaining to judicial forms and proceedings, they are all adapted to the tribunal of an Oriental Emir. This mode of representation pervades the whole, and is the very soul of the book.

A. But it has also numerous representations of objects pertaining to Egypt—of the Nile, (which here, as in Egypt, is called the sea), of the papyrus reed, of the crocodile and the islands of the dead.

E. Suffer me to proceed, and I will add also—the behemoth, (which was probably the hippopotamus of the Nile, and not the elephant,) the tombs of the kings, not forgetting the elephantiasis:—and why should it not? Job surely did not live in Egypt, or in other words, the scenery and mode of thinking in the book, are not Egyptian. The mythology which prevails through all the poetical representations is Hebrew, or rather Oriental, (taking this latter word to express the general notion of what belongs to the Hebrew in common with its kindred dialects). The ideas of God, of the world and of its origin, of man, of destiny, of religion, are all Hebrew or Oriental, such as are expressed in no other language but these. If you have not discovered this from our former conversations, you may nevertheless find it on every page of the book itself. Thus the Egyptian imagery is Egyptian still, and wears an aspect of extraneous and far-sought ornament. It is not to be mistaken, that in the whole book, this kind of Asiatic pomp of style prevails, both in the figurative representations and in the facts presented. We shall find in another part of our enquiries all the treasures of Oriental imagery in a poetic strain where we should least expect it,—in a eulogy of wisdom; and the same is observable in many other de-

scriptions in this book. They are introduced as something strange and beyond the knowledge of the vulgar. In respect to the ostrich, the behemoth, and the leviathan this is undeniably the case. Had these two last animals been common in the country, where Job lived, they could not have been described as so gigantick, nor with such an air of solemnity. They appear as foreign and strange monsters, as objects of curiosity and wonder ; and this is the purpose for which they are introduced.

A. Is it possible, then, to determine with any degree of precision the sphere in which the author of the book was at home, and what among the objects presented in it was strange, or what was familiar ?

E. With tolerable precision. The mode of life, the possessions, the judicial tribunal, the happiness of the Emir are all his own conceptions, and on these the whole is built. He is acquainted with the offering of sacrifices, but it is the patriarchal offering, conducted by Job himself, the father of the family. Arabian deserts, streams failing from drought, moving hordes and caravans are images of most frequent occurrence in the book. Bands of robbers, dwellers in caves, lions, and wild asses, the avenger of blood, all the formalities of an Asiatic court of justice, and a number of other less important circumstances, which cannot so easily be reckoned up, together point out, in accordance also with the LXX and the historical introduction, Idumaea as the place, in which the scene of the book is laid. On the other hand, the treasures brought from Africa, the rarities of Egypt stand out as ornaments derived from rare and far-sought knowledge. The leviathan and behemoth, at the end of the book, are the pillars of Hercules, the ultima Thule of the author's chart of knowledge.

A. You consider the behemoth, it seems, as the hippopotamus. According to the common opinion the elephant was intended.

E. The latest common opinion I have little chance of altering ; but that of earlier times supposed it to be the rhinoceros ; and not only respectable authorities, but obvious traits of the description favour this view. They are however not conclusive. In general, the description is undoubtedly that of an animal whose usual resort is the river, since it is introduced, as something singular, that he eateth grass like the ox, that the mountains bring him forth food, and the beasts of the field play around him. He sleeps among the reeds, and lies concealed among the marshes on the shore of the river, which clearly does not suit a description of the elephant. He goes against the stream, as if he would drink up the river with his enormous mouth, a character not well fitting a land animal. His strength too is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly, where on the contrary the elephant is weakest. His bones are like brazen rods, and his back-bone like a bar of iron. He that made him has furnished him with a sword, for the sharp-pointed and projecting tusks of the hippopotamus may be considered his weapons ; and the language applies better to these, than to the weapons of the elephant. Since, moreover, the name behemoth itself is probably the Egyptian name of this animal, *p-ehc-mouth*, (here modified, as all foreign words were by the Hebrews and Greeks, to suit their own forms), and since, in company with the crocodile, it is placed apart from the land animals, which also are arranged in a separate discourse by themselves, and represented, as all creatures of the watery realm are by the Orientals, as something foreign and monstrous ; it seems to me, that this opinion has at least a balance of probabilities in its favour, and will at length become the prevailing one. Read Bochart, Ludolf, and Reimar, and I believe you will find the description as accurate, as it could well be of a remote and strange animal.

A. But the proboscis, which he moveth like a cedar ?

E. It is not a proboscis, but the tail, which the language

here indicates ; nor is the length of the cedar the point of the comparison, but its bending over as the cedar bends its branches. This is the sense expressed by the ancient versions, and the image fits the appearance of this round-shaped monster. But enough. Who, think you, was the author of the book ?

A. It is said Moses wrote it, while he was with Jethro.

E. I am sorry that I cannot find reason to adopt this pretty general and quite ancient opinion. I, too, rank Moses very high as a poet, but find no more evidence that he wrote the book of Job, than that Solon wrote the *Iliad* and the *Eumenides* of *Æschylus*. I can boast, I believe, of having studied the poetry of Moses and this also without prejudice. I make allowance too for the difference which a change of circumstances, age, occupation, &c. would produce ; still they appear to me as directly opposed to each other, as the East and the West. The poetical style of Job is throughout concise, full of meaning, forcible, heroick, always, I may say, in the loftiest tone of expression and the boldest imagery. Moses, even in the sublimest passages, has a more flowing and gentle style. The very peculiarities in the style of Moses and in the arrangement of his imagery are foreign to this book. The voice, to which we are here listening, comes forth in rough and interrupted tones from among the rocks, and can never have been trained in the low and level plains of Egypt. The style of thought is that of an Arabian, of an Idumean, as well in the general scope of his imagery, as in those little favourite traits, which are often even more characteristic than any other. The fancy of the poet acquires its character in youth, and as it then shapes itself it always remains, especially in its great features, which early impressions render indelible. Job abounds so much in images drawn from the paternal and judicial character of an Oriental Emir, which he applies even to God, that we see in what sphere he was educated and his imagination formed. But of this Moses saw nothing in Egypt, nor did any of his fathers

sustain the character of an Eastern prince, such as is here exhibited. To him the whole of this was foreign ; and it would be a fact truly marvellous, if together with the poetry admitted to be his, his laws and institutions, he had produced also this collection of poetry, in the spirit of an entirely different race of people, of a different mode of life, of a world, in short, to which he was a stranger. By going over a few passages I might have saved the necessity of saying so much as I have ; but you can easily make the comparison for yourself.

A. May we not suppose, then, that Moses, while with Jethro, translated the poem from the Arabick ?

E. I might be willing to admit it, if it should seem to have come among the Hebrews by his means. But how are we to prove this ? In my opinion it is not a translation, but was written in Hebrew. I know of no ground there is to suppose it a translation. It approaches the poetical style of the Arabians, as Idumæa borders on Arabia, and their customs and the spirit of their poetry naturally exert a reciprocal influence. I find nothing farther than this to give credit to the hypothesis. Rather the strong features of originality in the book are at variance with it.

A. At least, then, Moses may have found it during his residence with his father-in-law.

E. So that we may not leave him idle, while tending the flocks of Jethro. Yet I must say, that even this opinion, however gladly I might entertain it, seems to me improbable. Had this book, accredited by their respect for Moses, come at that period into the hands of the Hebrews with its assemblage of incomparable imagery and genuine poetry, we should have found many more traces of its having been imitated by the Hebrew poets, than are now perceivable. How often do the prophets crowd and encroach upon each other ! borrowing their images one from the other, in a confined and narrow circle, and only filling it out and applying it each in his peculiar way.

This ancient and venerable pyramid stands for the most part unimitated, as it is perhaps inimitable.

A. But are there not then imitations in the Psalms ?

E. Imitations perhaps of particular passages and of individual images. * But do you see no nearer way for the Israelites of the age of David to be acquainted with Edom, than through the intercourse, which they had in the time of Moses ?

A. David we know reduced Edom to subjection.

E. While Moses came in collision with them by their refusing him a passage. It was besides not accordant with the sentiments of Moses to borrow from the people bordering on Canaan, either books or religious notions, since he aimed as far as possible to make the Israelites in every thing a separate people. In the time of David the matter was otherwise. When he cast his shoe over Edom, as a servant, both its strong cities and whatever treasures of knowledge it might possess, were at his command ; and a king, who valued himself more, and gained greater honour, on account of his poetical productions, than of his throne, would probably take some pains to obtain them. Thus came into his hands, this book of ancient wisdom, celebrating in lofty and poetical strains the steadfast piety of one of their ancient Emirs ; and well was it worthy to be read by a prince and patriarch like David. If in his later Psalms, (for in these alone are similar expressions observable), he strove to imitate it, this proves, that he too felt the sublimity of its style, and aimed to join it with his pastoral strains. I do not myself, however, discover so many passages even in the Psalms, which appear to be properly imitations of this, still fewer in the prophets ; and Ezekiel is the first, who mentions Job by name. This occurs in e. xiv, 20 ; and the name is here placed after those of Noah and Daniel. In short, I follow the most ancient notice we have of this book. It is attached to the translation of the LXX and is as follows. " This book is translated from the Syriaek, (a manuscript in the Syriaek character). Job, whose proper name was Jobab,

lived in the district of Ausitis on the borders of Idumæa and Arabia. On the father's side he was descended from Esau, and was the fifth from Abraham. The kings of Edom were Balak the son of Beor, Jobab, who was called Job, &c. The friends, who came to him were Eliphaz, an Edomite, prince of Teman; Baldad, Emir of Shuah; Zophar king Naamah." This account cannot be supposed entirely factitious, especially nothing in the book contradicts it, though indeed it may easily be said, that it grew out of the resemblance of the names Job and Jobab, and is founded on the family register of the Edomites furnished by Moses. But certainty cannot be attained in matters of so high antiquity, and it is happily unnecessary for the understanding of the book.

A. Do you then consider the historical introduction equally ancient with the poetical parts?

E. I have sometimes had doubts on this point, but found them of little weight. The first chapters are written with such patriarchal simplicity, such commanding brevity, and unstudied sublimity, that they are fully worthy of the author of the poetry. I may add too, that the scene presented in the first chapter is obviously the groundwork of the whole book.

A. But how is the mention of Satan to be accounted for—a notion of so much later origin.

E. The representation of Satan, as he appears here, I hold to be very ancient. He is simply one of the angels, i. e. one among the attendant train of the Supreme Sovereign. In this character he is sent as a messenger to search through the world and bring information. He merely acts in accordance with the duty of his office, and God himself directs his attention to Job. He goes no farther than he is authorized to do, and this he does only by way of trial. God maintains the right, though for a long time, indeed, he permits Job to be severely tried; and at the end of the book Satan is no longer heard of. This conception of him, as an angel or messenger commissioned of God, is so widely different from the later Chaldee

conception, that I cannot but wonder how it should have led Heath and others to consider the whole book of Chaldee origin. Such a conclusion falls very wide of the mark. The Chaldee Satan is the opposer of Ormuzd, and the primitive cause of all evil. The agent represented in Job cannot even be compared with the Typhon of the Egyptians, or what the ancients called a man's evil genius. He is nothing but the attendant angel of the tribunal, a messenger sent out to make enquiry, to chastise and to punish. I have already remarked, how much the reference of every thing to a court of justice prevails throughout the book.

A. Yet I confess this view of the subject not a little surprises me.

E. Why should it? Every age and every nation transfers the picture of its own customs both to the upper and nether world. As in the first chapter here it is represented, that God sits in the heavens, as an Emir, and at certain periods gathers around him his servants, the angels, in order to receive information from the earth, and as Satan is sent with a court commission to prove Job, whether he be a true worshipper of God, and faithfully adheres to him, so Job appears through the whole book, as one who is punished without a hearing, as an aggrieved person, who has been unjustly treated. He wishes only, that he may see his judge, and that he would himself take cognizance of the matter. His friends are the advocates of God, who assume to justify the Supreme and All-powerful Judge against him as already condemned, and resort to various subterfuges for that end. At last the sovereign appears in his own person, and in the attributes of majesty calls Job to account. Job is silent, restitution is made, and he is richly compensated for the grievances which he had suffered. This is the plan of the book.

A. It would be very instructive to see it exhibited in detail.

E. I have sketched some farther outlines of it, which you can read. You will find the connecting thread of discourse, and the characters of the speakers pointed out.

A. Is there, then, a methodical connexion among the speakers, an intelligible relation of parts, and a progression in the action represented, discoverable ?

E. Certainly there is, only not after our fashion. Job begins with uttering his complaints :* the three opponents make their several speeches, and Job answers. This process is repeated three times,† except that in the third, the part of Zophar is wanting. Job after defending himself against them keeps the ground alone, and sets forth his cause in representations, which are unquestionably among the finest passages in the book.‡ He pictures his former happy condition, his present wretchedness, and his innocence, in a style at once so beautiful and affecting, that at the close, in the fulness and simplicity of his heart, he utters the wish

Oh that I had one, who had heard me,
Now that I have made my defence !
Oh that the Almighty had answered me,
And one had writ my cause in a book !
As a mantle I would lay it on my shoulder,
As a diadem would I bind it to my turban,
I would number all my steps before him ;
As a prince would I draw near unto him.

As such too, he stands before us in the book, and listens to the discourse of Elihu,|| till God appears, as the supreme in authority and wisdom, to decide the contest.§

A. Is the book, then, to be considered a kind of drama ?

E. Not according to our conception of the drama ; for how would such an one be possible, in exhibiting what is here placed before us ? Here is no action ; all is motionless, and the time is spent in prolonged discourses. The historical statements before and after are obviously but the prologue and epilogue, the entrance and the exit. But I shall not contend

* Chap. iii.

† Chap. iv—xiv. xv—xxi. xxii—xxvi.

‡ Chap. xxvii—xxxi. || Chap. xxxii—xxxvii. § Chap. xxxviii—xlii.

about a word. The discourses are indeed divided off at intervals ; yet the words scene, act, would seem to me entirely misplaced here. It is in fact simply a consessus of wise men, engaged pro and contra in discussing the justice of the Supreme Governor of the world, a conflict of argument and of wisdom respecting the case of Job. In this alone consists its dramatic character.

A. Do you suppose the book to be founded on historical facts ?

E. That is to me a matter of indifference. Its powerful and profound poetry makes it a history, such as we have few examples of. It becomes, by the depth and truth of its exhibitions, a history of afflicted and suffering innocence all over the world. It does, indeed, render the picture more grateful to think a man like Job actually lived and that he gave proof of a soul so firm, of a spirit so elevated as this book exhibits. In that case the book is for him the perpetual memorial which he wished,—a monument more noble than brass, more durable than marble. It is written with deep impression upon the hearts of men, and its living imagery will be preserved in everlasting remembrance.

A. But the discourses which are contained there, the tribunal and the appearing of God, the representation of Satan, and the substance of the images presented cannot be all history. Who could discourse extempore in such style as this ?

E. In the style of composition it is poetry from beginning to end. Of this there is no doubt, but poetry of a kind, which is of all the most natural. The Orientals are fond of these learned consessions, and of long discourses in a lofty, figurative style, which they hear through, and listen to with patience, and then answer after the same fashion. This *משל* *mashal*, is their philosophy, the stately ornament of their rhetorick and poetry. To gratify a taste for this, to indulge the cherished fondness for hearing lofty sentences, and for celebrating the

combats of wit and wisdom, the poet meditated and wrote this conflict of suffering virtue, of human wisdom overcoming and again overcome. How much of it may be history, how much of it may ever have been actually spoken as here recorded, it is of no use for us to know. The poet heard it all and has composed it into a harmonious whole, which is still extant and perhaps the most ancient composition of art in the world.

A. I rejoice at it, for I am deeply interested in the subject of it also, as showing how wise men of the most ancient times discoursed of the providence of God and the destiny of man.

E. In order to the last, however, we must previously treat of the Oriental traditions, which relate to the creation and destination of man, by themselves. We shall there find ourselves in a garden, where the earliest germs of poetry were cultivated, and learn what flowers and fruits have been derived from it to the poetical productions of later times. You well know the estimation, in which the Orientals and all nations, whose minds are equally under the dominion of sense, hold such traditions of the olden time, the sayings, names, and historical notices of their fathers. The most ancient poetry, and the style of thought in this book, receive their form and character wholly from this state of mind.

A. I shall gladly accompany you into this garden of the primitive Hebrew world.

E. Here are the few pages respecting the book of Job, to which I alluded.

A P P E N D I X .

Brief outline of the book of Job considered as a composition.

The scene presented in the book is two-fold, in heaven, and on earth. The scene of action is above ; that which is below is occupied with discourse only respecting what is

acted in the other, without comprehending its true import. Hence the uncertain and fluctuating speculations—the every day condition of all the philosophies and theodicees in the world.

The object, of which the book treats, is an upright, guiltless man, in a condition of suffering, and even of bodily anguish. We forgive him all his lamentations and sighs, for even a hero is permitted to groan from bodily pain. He sees death near, and longs for it; his life is embittered, why should he not groan?

Job's sufferings are inflicted to promote the honour and glory of God; they are designed to maintain the truth of what God had spoken in praise of his servant. Can human sufferings be represented in a light more honourable to the sufferer? In this general view of the contents of the book, it may be considered a theodicee, or philosophical justification of the Governour of the world in the permission of evil; not a partial justification such as the wise ones of the earth contrived, though these too said much that is ingenious.

But however ingenious the speculations of these worldly philosophers, they yielded no consolation to the afflicted sufferer, but rather embittered his sorrows. Job surpassed them in his representations of the power and wisdom of God, in those views, by which they sought to silence his complaints, but remained miserable still—the customary picture of worldly consolation. Their views are too narrow, and too much obscured. They look in the dust of the earth for that which they should seek above the stars. None of them look so far; no one even conjectures, that the reason of Job's afflictions was what the first chapter represents it.

In the mean time what honour is bestowed upon the sackcloth and ashes of the humble sufferer! He is made a spectacle to angels and to the whole host of heaven. Job maintains his integrity, justifies the word of his maker, and God holds the crown in readiness to adorn his brow. This

two-fold scene, and the invisible spectators of Job's patience in suffering, give a sacredness to the representations of the whole book.

But the man, whom the inhabitants of heaven are constrained to regard as a model of human fortitude and constancy, is upon the earth, involved in a conflict of argument, and here he is human like other men. The poet has given him a character of rashness and warmth of feeling, which at the first address of Eliphaz, though really of a soothing character, hurries him away. This leaven of his natural temper is the condiment of his virtue, and indeed of the dialogue itself, which would be tedious and uninteresting, if it contained only the complaints of the sufferer, and the condolence of his friends.

An accuracy of discrimination, and a nice sense of propriety in adapting the parts, pervade the whole work. The three philosophers exhibit distinctive characters in their discourses, and Job is made to surpass them in their several attempts both as a philosopher and as a poet. Eliphaz is the most sensible and discerning, and so modest, that in the first lesson which he aims to give to Job he does not speak his own thoughts altogether, but communicates an oracle.* Bildad treats Job more severely, and Zophar for the most part only repeats what Bildad had said. He is also the first to withdraw from the scene.

The round of interlocutory discourse between the parties is thrice repeated.† At the close of the first, they are already so much at variance, that Job formally appeals from them as his accusers to God.‡ In the second, the thread of the argument is most involved, and the plot, if we may so call it, most intricate; for at the end of this, Job affirms in answer to Zophar, that the wicked even prosper in the world, though he is only seduced to do so in the heat of discussion. Eliphaz seeks, by an ingenious turn, to produce a better under-

* Chap. v. 12.

† Chap. iv—xiv. xv—xxi. xxii—xxvi.

‡ Chap. xiii.

|| Chap. xxi.

standing, but the matter has gone too far. Job declares his sentiments;* Bildad has little,† and Zophar nothing to say in reply, and Job comes off triumphant. He then proceeds with calm confidence, like a lion among his defeated enemies, retracts what he had uttered from the excitement of the contest,‡ and in three successive paragraphs exhibits specimens of thought and imagery, which are the crown of the whole work.||

However monotonous all these discourses may have sounded to us, they have in fact their lights and shades ; and the course of thought, or rather, the complication of the argument becomes more and more intricate from one discourse to another, till Job returns upon his own steps, and modifies his former expressions. Whoever has not been guided by this thread, and especially, if he has not remarked how Job wrests always from his hand his opponent's own weapon, and either says the same thing better, or assumes the same grounds for his own discourse, has failed of apprehending the animated and progressive character, in short, the very soul of the book.

Job commences with a beautiful elegy,§ and closes for the most part each of his discourses with an affecting lamentation of the like kind. These may be compared to the chorus of the ancient tragedy, and serve to give universality of character and human interest to the argument of the piece.

After Job has silenced the three wise men, a younger prophet ushers himself upon the scene.¶ Like most inspired men of the same sort, he is assuming, bold, and supercilious. He discourses in a lofty style, and accumulates figurative expressions without end, and to no purpose ; and hence no one even returns him an answer. He stands there as an empty shadow, between the discourses of Job and the address of the Supreme Judge, who by his actual appearance only shews his nothingness, and the shadow vanishes. His introduction

* Chap. xxiv. † Chap. xxvi. ‡ Chap. xxvii. || Chap. xxviii—xxxi.

§ Chap. iii.

¶ Chap. xxxii—xxxvii.

in its relation to the composition of the whole is wisely and instructively arranged.

God himself appears upon the scene unexpected and with overpowering magnificence. He breaks in upon the prophet, who, without being aware of it, had described his coming, and treated it as an impossible event; passes by the wise men, who had assumed to be his advocates, and directs his discourse to Job. With him too, he speaks not at first as a judge, but as a teacher.* He proposes problems and hard questions to him, who had overcome all opponents and exhausted as it were all the treasures of wisdom. These relate to the mysteries of creation and providence, and confound and put to silence the worldly wisdom even of Job himself.

He places before him seven striking forms of the brute creation, and finally the monsters of the deep,† all which, as the paternal author of the universe, he has created, and for all which, with paternal fondness, he daily provides. "Wherefore are these creatures here? They are not for man's behoof, most of them are even injurious to man." With all his worldly wisdom, Job is put to silence and confounded. Submission therefore to the infinite understanding, the incomprehensible plan, but obvious and acknowledged goodness, of the great father of all, who cares for the crocodile and the raven—this is the solution of the problems concerning providence and destiny from the mouth of the Supreme Ruler himself, who utters his voice in the tempest, with the conspiring movement, as it were, of the whole creation. The true theodicee for man is a study of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in all the works of nature, and an humble acknowledgment, that his understanding and his plan surpass the comprehension of ours.

God does not make known even to Job, wherefore he had subjected him to trial. He restored him to happiness, and recompensed him for the injuries, which he had suffered,

* Chap. xxxviii.

† Chap. xxxix-xli.

and this was all that he could ask. So far, on the other hand, were those who had placed themselves in God's stead from being honoured and rewarded, that they were required to seek atonement by an offering from the hand of Job.

Thus lofty and divine is the plan of the book, of which I have sketched only some feeble outlines. If not the production of a sovereign prince, it is worthy to have been so, for the style of its representations is princely. Through the whole book God acts as the king, as the father, as the superintendant and director of the wide creation. Angels and men, the raven and the behemoth are all equal in his sight. The finest descriptions of the attributes and of the government of God, the most persuasive grounds of consolation, and whatever can be said, on opposite grounds of argument, of providence and human destiny are scattered throughout the book; but the divinest consolation and instruction are found in the general conception and plan of the book itself. In this view it is an epic representation of human nature, and a theodicee or justification of the moral government of God, not in words, but in its exhibition of events, in that working, that is without words. *Eecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo Deus. Eecce par Deo dignum vir fortis cum male fortuna compositus.*

But who shall answer our enquiries respecting him, to whose meditations we are indebted for this ancient book, this justification of the ways of God to man, and sublime exaltation of humanity,—who has exhibited them too, in this silent picture, in the fortunes of an humble sufferer, clothed in sackcloth and sitting in ashes, but fired with the sublime inspirations of his own wisdom? Who shall point us to the grave of him, whose soul kindled with these divine conceptions, to whom was vouchsafed such access to the counsels of God, to angels and the souls of men, who embraced in a single glance the heavens and the earth, and who could send forth his living spirit, his poetic fire, and his human affections

to all that exists, from the land of the shadow of death to the starry firmament, and beyond the stars? No cypress, flourishing in unfading green, marks the place of his rest. With his unuttered name he has consigned to oblivion all that was earthly, and, leaving his book for a memorial below, is engaged in a yet nobler song in that world, where the voice of sorrow and mourning is unheard, and where the morning stars sing together.

Or if he, the patient sufferer, was here the recorder of his own sufferings, and of his own triumph, of his own wisdom first victorious in conflict, and then humbled in the dust, how blest have been his afflictions, how amply rewarded his pains! Here, in this book, full of imperishable thought, he still lives, gives utterance to the sorrows of his heart, and extends his triumph over centuries and continents. Not only, according to his wish, did he die in his nest, but a phoenix has sprung forth from his ashes, and from his odorous nest is diffused an incense, which gives and will forever give reviving energy to the faint and strength to the powerless. He has drawn down the heavens to the earth, encamped their host invisibly around the bed of languishing, and made the afflictions of the sufferer a spectacle to angels; has taught, that God too looks with a watchful eye upon his creatures, and exposes them to the trial of their integrity for the maintenance of his own truth, and the promotion of his own glory. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.*

*James, v. 11.

DIALOGUE VI.

Of Paradise. Poetical ideas of it exhibited in pictures of youth, of love, and of the scenery of nature. Whether it ever had a real existence. Why Moses placed it in the remoteness of an enchanted land. From what cause also this region particularly became the scene of so many tales of enchantment. Of the tree of life. Beautiful peculiarity of it in the poetry of the Hebrews. Whether the representations of Paradise tend to hold men too much under the influence of sense. Whether they contribute to cherish the Oriental love of repose. Of Adam's conversing with the brutes. Pictures of the golden age in the peaceful intercourse of all animals with each other. Of love in Paradise. The same ideally represented in all songs of love. Whether Adam received Eve with songs and prophetic anticipations. Delicate expression of the affections of the sexes in these primeval traditions. Of the tree of knowledge. What is meant by the knowledge of good and evil. Why the serpent might eat of the tree, but man not. Character of the serpent as an artful, crafty animal, and a deceiver. Why men wished to be as the Elohim. Distinction between true and false wisdom. Whether the tradition of the tree of knowledge is an Esopic fable. Explanation of it as an ancient tradition. Consequences of eating of the forbidden tree. Change in the condition of man. Analogy of what is here related to our own experience. The original germs of various kinds of Oriental poetry contained in it. Of the Cherubim. Whether they were a mythological representation of the thunder storm in the form of horses. Of the war-chariot, in which God is represented in Habakkuk. Of the Cherubim in the tabernacle of Moses, in the temple of Solomon, and in Ezechiel's visions. Of Ezechiel's Cherub on the mountain of God. Traditions of the most ancient fabled animals of the primitive world, who guarded the treasures of Paradise. Whether the Cherubim of Moses were Sphinxes. How from the ark of the covenant these representations were transferred to the clouds, and at last appeared in visions of the prophets. Their origin and composition. Of the Oriental mountains of God. Of the chariot of Elijah, and of the chariots of God in the wilderness. Most ancient representations of thunder. Appendix. Biblical poems descriptive of the Cherubim and of thunder.

EUTHYPHRON. We are again together, and are favoured with a delightful morning.

ALCIPHRON. Yes, very opportunely, and with singular appropriateness to the subject of our present conversation. You are to carry me back, you will recollect, to the infancy of our race, and so at the same time to the Paradise of my own early years ; for in fact, the race, as a whole, in my apprehension, no less than the individual, has its distinct and successive periods of developement ; and those of the one are analogous to those of the other. Thus the morning will be to me one of delightful recollections.

E. Recollections of your own youth do you mean ?

A. It was the delight of my childhood to wander in those scenes of beauty and innocence, which we picture to ourselves in the primeval Paradise, to accompany the patriarchs of our race with affectionate regard, or with tears of regret, in the earliest events of their history. Early impressions from the poets without doubt contributed to this ; and indeed we have very fine poets, who have given us pictures of such objects.

E. Every people has them. Among all nations, who are not wholly savage, a feeble echo at least is still heard respecting the blissful golden age of their ancestors. The poets, always the most uncorrupted and susceptible of impressions among a people, the children as it were of the Muses, have seized upon these traditions ; the young have a natural fondness for them, and repeat in their own dreams the pictures of happiness, which they present, while the spring revives the recollection of them in the minds of all, and restores their original freshness as it were from year to year. Thus pastoral songs, poetical delineations of the good old times, and scenes of Paradisiacal peace and happiness have been multiplied, and will always remain the favourite objects of contemplation for the young. What indeed does man aim at with all his ardent wishes and longings, what can he have, but Paradise ? that is, beauty and repose, health and love, simplicity and innocence ?

A. But how sad to reflect, however, that most of what is thus represented is but a dream, or soon to become so. The primeval Paradise is lost, the Paradise of spring and of youth passes rapidly away, and we are driven out of it into the open field of labour, amid the summer heats of anxious toil and care. Wherever, too among the nations, a race may be found in the enjoyment of innocence, of peace and of Paradise, there we soon see the serpent intruding, and happiness trifled away through groundless and self-excited passion. Close by the tree of life grows always for man the wished for tree of that proud knowledge and understanding, of which he partakes at the expense of his life. Such is the fate of mortals.

E. You are a very eloquent interpreter, I perceive, of those traditions, of which we are to speak, and must have felt deeply the refined yet natural sense, which they express.

A. Yet there is much of which I have my doubts. Had Paradise ever a real existence, or is the whole a poetical tradition? Moses clearly represents it as a wide extended and to him unknown fairy land. He places it, too, precisely in those remote regions, where fable has placed every thing marvellous, including in its wide compass Colchis and Cashmire with their golden streams, the Phasis and the Oxus, as well as the regions of the Indus and Euphrates. In this broad land, to which he gives the name of Eden, or the land of delight, he represents God as planting a garden. Where, then, in a country so extensive was the garden situated? Where are the marvellous trees, which grew in it—the tree of life and the tree of knowledge? Have these ever come to maturity? Where are they now, and where stood the Cherubim? All this, I confess, has to me, the appearance of fable.

E. So it should have; and the purpose, which we are now seeking to accomplish, is to distinguish between fable and truth, that is, between historical fact and the dress in which it is clothed. You have remarked correctly, that Moses, or the tradition copied by him, gives the situation of Paradise only

within very wide and vague limits, and that the region in which it is placed, is just that fable-land, in which the nations of antiquity placed their finest pictures of all that is visionary and enchanted,—the golden fleece, the golden apples, the plant of immortality, &c. It was the garden of their Gods and Genii, of their Peris and Neris, with other creatures of enchantment. But do not all these later marvels show, that there must have been some more simple tradition, and some real fact in primeval history, in which they had their origin? There must have been some cause for the singular fact, that the traditions of the whole world chance to point towards one and the same region. The human race, which, so far as history and the progress of cultivation enables us to judge, has been only gradually spread over the earth, must some where have had a beginning; and where more probably—whether we look at history, or the formation of the earth's surface—than in those very regions, to which these traditions direct us? Here we find the most elevated places in the continent of Asia, the back-bone, as it were, of the ancient world. They are the most fertile, too, on which the sun shines. Here nature seems almost spontaneously to yield her agency to man, and anticipate his labour. Moreover the very indefiniteness, which you speak of in Moses' account of the situation of Paradise, is an evidence of its truth. He would give no more than tradition had furnished. He had neither traversed the country, nor could have found there, had such ever been made, the original archives of Paradise; so that what he did was all which he had the means of doing. But it is not our business at present to trace historical truth. We may therefore leave this tradition in its original vagueness, and consider only to what poetical representations it has given rise.

A. It has indeed been a fruitful source, a tree with many branches, and adorned with flowers. For the traditional ideas of Paradise infuse themselves into the boldest anticipations of

the prophets, and the tree of life still blooms in the very last of the books of scripturo. It is thus the beginning and the end of Hebrew poetry.

E. And still beautiful at the end, as in the beginning. How has the Paradise of Adam been ennobled by the prophets! They have exalted and transferred it to the times of the Messiah, while the writings of the New Testament have raised it to still higher dignity in the representation of heaven itself. There blooms the tree of life, there we have placed all the scenes of Paradise, and seek beyond the rivers and the ocean the golden regions of antiquity and the islands of the blest. In the whole compass of Oriental poetry, even among the Arabians and Persians, the ideas of Paradise contain the highest ideal of human happiness and bliss. It is the dream of their love, of their youth, of their hopes, both for the present and even the future world—a land,

Where vain illusions shall deceive no more,
Nor thought revive the anguish of the past;
Where all, that is, endures, and all is bliss,
An endless bridal and perpetual dawn.
A land, whose streams a sweeter fragrance yield,
And trees cast round a more substantial shade,
That never wastes nor vanishes away.

A. But may not such pictures have had an undue effect in holding men under the influence of sensuous objects?

E. And what pictures, either of this or of the future world, should the poet make, but such as are representable to sense? Beyond the limits of our own fair world of sense, too, we know no other, whose images might be employed; and men of those primeval times had no more abstract instruments of thought even, than the images of sense. If those, who were already given up to sensual indulgence, have still continued so, if Mohammed, in accordance with his previous propensities has conceived the joys of Paradise with the grossness of sensu-

ality, the fault is in the abuse of sense, not in the thing itself. And yet injustice is sometimes done in this point even to the disciples of Mohammed. Their poets and philosophers have shown as much metaphysical refinement respecting their future Paradise, as any of the Northern nations. In general too, it seems to me, we must make some allowance here for the characteristick spirit of Eastern nations. They feel and enjoy more exquisitely ; why should not also their poetical expressions of love, of delight, of desire, and hope, breathe the same spirit of refined and voluptuous enjoyment ?

A. It seems a thing of course ; and in poetical pictures of innocence, or of the beauties of spring, I gladly admit it, and fear only, that representations of Paradise, in the same spirit, may too much cherish that relaxation and repose of mind, to which the Orientals in general are so much given.

E. Suppose they do. I know not, since we are so well furnished with task-masters in the community, why the national poetry should be a task-master also. To me it is gratifying rather, that in their burning plains, wherever they meet with shady trees, or hear the sound of bubbling fountains and cooling streams, their lively imaginations picture to them the tranquil joys of Paradise, and that, in the poetick fervour of their feelings, they denominate this the land of Eden, that the dwelling place of repose, the strong hold of pleasure, or by other terms of the like kind. Would it have been better, think you, that like the Northern heroes they had transformed their Paradise into a golden banqueting hall, or had conceived Hobbes' representation of wild and universal war, as the original state of nature ? It is the office of poetry, I apprehend, to soften the manners of men, not to make them savage. All representations, which contribute to this end, promote their improvement. Pictures of a Paradise of innocence, of love, and enjoyment in the bosom of nature have undoubtedly done so—

A. Have those two marvellous trees also contributed to the effect ?

E. The tree of life certainly. It is, in the poetry of the Orientals, even in itself considered, a most agreeable and delightful image. Did we but know where it blooms, should we not all go on a pilgrimage to visit it? Now that the fear of God, temperance, and wisdom are represented as a tree of life, which blooms for us all, should we be less excited? Can we be unaffected by it, where represented, as in the last book of the New Testament, as the tree of immortality? There it stands before us, at the end of our course and of the strife of our pilgrimage, in the Paradise of God. It is there to revive and restore the conquering but wearied soldier, to heal all nations with its unfading leaves, and to nourish them with its ever fresh and new returning fruits. When my tongue shall no longer be sensible to the fruits of the earth, let me die in the hope, which this representation inspires.

A. And the tree of knowledge?

E. We will talk of that hereafter. Did it never strike you also, as a fine incident in the account of Paradise, that God brings to Adam the animals of the brute creation to see what he would call them? By this living intercourse and study of nature, man cultivated his faculties of perception, of comparison and abstraction, his reason and language. The first names in his dictionary were the living cries of brute animals, modified by their relation to his organs, and to his feelings. The first perception, which he had of the various dispositions and characters of the soul, was in the brutes; for in their looks, their gait, and whole mode of life, that which peculiarly characterizes each is distinctively, consistently, and unchangingly expressed. The divinity has here exhibited before us, as it were, in a sportive representation, a continual *Æsopick* fable. Nor has any poetical tradition of Paradise forgotten moreover, to represent man here in conversation with the brutes. He is their king, their master, their eldest brother. They live at peace among themselves, and in quiet subjection to him.

A. A fabulous age truly, in a two-fold sense.

E. At least a golden age. Listen to a single description of it in the language of Isaiah.

* The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the kid,
The calf, the young lion, and the fatling together,
And a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall feed quietly;
Their young ones shall lie down together,
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The suckling shall play on the hole of the asp,
The weaned child on the cockatrice's den;
There shall be none to hurt nor destroy
In all my holy mountain,
For the earth is full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the sea.

Of such pictures as this the prophets are full, and with the most skilful and animating application.

A. And the representation of love, as it existed in Paradise—what can you say in praise of that? Milton and others, it is true, have given very fine descriptions of it.

E. Many others have done so besides Milton. The love of Paradise is the artless and primeval description of all love. The new and mysterious longing of the man, who finds himself alone, and is unable to express the want which he feels, but which is responded to, as it were, from the heart of his paternal Creator, his sleep, his dream perhaps, the forming of his wife out of his own breast, out of the shield and resting place of his own heart, the farther particulars, that God brought her to him, and blessed them both, that Adam embraced her with the natural expression of admiration and delight, that both were naked, but as yet without the occasion or the feeling of shame—all this is so delicately felt, so briefly, yet so beautifully expressed, that were it even a mere poetical representation, it is yet worthy to be the poetry of Paradise.

Love of this description belongs to Paradise. It is the first incipient waking of the heart in the beautiful visions and dreamy anticipations of youth. All the genuine inspirations and poetry of that age, indeed, are drawn from the quiet fountains of this garden of Eden, these feelings so full of simplicity and innocence. The Oriental poets moreover are accustomed to draw their pictures of love and youth in this same spirit. The Song of Solomon, for example, might seem to have been written in Paradise. Adam's simple expressions of admiration and love, "thou art my own, thou art my other self," are heard in its alternating voices from one end of it to the other.

A. You do not suppose, however, that Adam himself uttered the words ascribed to him, with the prophetick expression which they include?

E. Whether he did or not, the feeling, which animates them, was his feeling, otherwise neither tradition nor the writer, who recorded it, would have put the language in his mouth. Let him have uttered it as he would, and as he was able, by tones, or gestures, or perhaps by both together, it is that simplest, fullest, and purest emotion, which, united with innocence and prophetick anticipation, makes up the whole Paradise of the heart. The developement of other propensities, according to this account, was the fruit of the forbidden tree, the step, as it were, by which they went out from Eden, and you know the consequences, which were brought upon the mother of our race.

A. You have made out a rather refined analysis of the history of Paradise. Could it be the aim of these ancient traditions to explain and analyze it for us in this manner?

E. It is at least an incidental purpose of traditions so full of meaning and of sentiment as these, for the narrative is obviously directed to this end. At first "they are naked and are not ashamed," they eat of the tree, and see their nakedness; the Paternal Judge appears and makes known to them

their future lot, plainly the state of marriage and of family cares and anxieties, and the divine being himself provided them with clothing. The Paradise of their emotions is over, the scene is changed, and they are involved in the toils and troubles of life.

A. This view resembles the hypothesis—

E. I beg you will mention no mere hypothesis* like that to which you seem to allude. Nothing is more foreign to the language and allegorical style of the Orientals, than this, and several others, which are yet more improbable and far-fetched. The Orientals know no allegorical dress of such fashion, as would make the tree of knowledge what this hypothesis assumes. A fiction of this sort is but one of the impure inventions of our own age, unworthy of a narrative so ancient, of such child-like simplicity and such purity, as the history of Paradise. The event alluded to in regard to Adam and his wife is directly spoken of, and on the other hand the feelings, which sprung from partaking of the tree, are given with truth and simplicity. They were new, but disturbing and disagreeable emotions, and they fled to conceal themselves among the trees of the garden. Their father's voice breaks in upon the tumult of their unquiet anticipations, and you know what followed. If all this was what your hypothesis supposes, then we may prove that white is black.

A. I wish you would explain your views more clearly also respecting the tree itself, and the instrument, by which deception was produced. In doing so you are unfolding and explaining to me perhaps the most ancient fables and hieroglyphics in existence, and that too without going aside from our proper purpose.

E. Whether this narrative be a fabulous and hieroglyphick picture, will appear hereafter ; at present let us consider it simply in its proper character, as an artless, child-like tradi-

* Probably that of Beverland is here meant.

tion. What think you was the tree of knowledge ? What is the import of the expression ?

A. The knowledge of good and evil means, in the language of the East, so far as I know, prudence, discretion. It is commonly predicated of those years, in which a man comes to understanding, or it denotes one's moral judgment, his capacity for the exercise of this, in short, his practical understanding.

E. And thus, when a man comes to years of understanding, he knows how to distinguish—what, hitherto, he has been learning to distinguish—good and evil. If he remains true to his duty, and resists all temptations to the contrary, he distinguishes good and evil. If by a faulty step he is made to experience the fact, that the punishment of his fault immediately follows his not distinguishing, then he knows what is good and evil, but not in the most agreeable way. Here you see the whole history of this tree, and its true meaning. God forbade man the use of it, and hence he was charged with a specifick duty in relation to it. This was the first easy exercise in the distinguishing of good and evil. All other trees were good, for the use of them was permitted ; this was evil, for it was forbidden. The serpent interpreted otherwise, and said “ this tree is forbidden to you, because it gives the knowledge of good and evil, that is, a higher knowledge. Eat of it ; and from being children you shall become men, from being men you shall become Elohim.” This was a second and different meaning. Finally they ate of it and were indeed enlightened. They saw truly, that they had done wrong ; and feelings and views were awakened in them, which they might well have done without. These the Creator made for them the occasion of new trials and duties. He placed them in a different condition, and aided them with the first necessary inventions. This was a third meaning. God might now say, either in derision or in earnest, “ Man has become as one of the Elohim, he has learned to distinguish good and

evil." Thus, as we look at the narrative in different points of view, we find one and the same idea, having different aspects, but essentially the same thing. Can any thing be more satisfactory, than a development of this sort, so complete and so simple ?

A. It is very well in a fable, but I know not whether it be equally so in a history, on which so much depends. Millions of men have tasted death in the eating of this apple, and yet it was eaten, it seems, through a misunderstanding.

E. The doctrinal consequences remain as they were, and do not concern us at present. We are treating here of a tradition handed down from ancient times, and from the infancy of our race, which must be considered in the spirit of those times. Let us proceed to examine it more closely in this relation. It contains in fact the fundamental ideas of all moral poetry in the East.

A. If so much depends upon it, I would very gladly do so.

E. In the first place, then, the man had obligations of duty to discharge ; the brute which probably ate of the tree, and by his example (the most powerful language) excited the man to eat, had none. For the brute to eat was no sin, for man it was otherwise. Do you observe the distinction ?

A. It occurs to me also, that the Orientals divide created beings into those, which are free, and those which have obligations of duty. The first includes all brutes, since they have no command given them ; man alone is bound by commands and a law of duty.

E. This distinction throws light upon the whole matter. The serpent acted in simple accordance with its nature, when it ate of the tree ; the man when he would eat of it, and follow the example of the brute, neglecting the dictates of reason, acted in violation of his duty. Do you remember what was said of Adam's intercourse with the brutes ?

A. He learned from them, and made use of their example. On this occasion too he learned a lesson of evil.

E. And what sort of animal did God employ as the accidental cause of the first aberration of his reason, of his faculties of perception and imitation? Could he have used a more fit one? The character of the serpent is that of subtilty and craft. Here he acts and speaks in accordance with it, and is afterwards exhibited in the same character. He is the symbol and receives the reward of a deceiver and seducer.

A. The history 'I perceive assumes a new character. Would that it were a fable! It would indeed be a beautiful fable.

E. In regard to its outward form and colouring, it should always be considered as such. It was a fable, but one represented in outward act. Without doubt you are acquainted with numerous traits in the fables of *Æsop* and *Lockman*, which resemble our account here of the serpent's character, and the curse inflicted upon him.

A. Yes, the fables and traditions of the East are full of them. They ascribe to the serpent manifold art and wisdom, the art, for example, which men have so much sought after, of becoming young again, and restoring their sight in old age,—that also of hiding themselves in danger with great skill, especially the head, in which their power and life are concentrated. It is said too, they possess the secrets of nature, and are actuated by a spirit. I have read many marvellous tales how serpents heal the sick, understand the voice of the charmer, and stop their ears against disagreeable words of enchantment; how they listen to musick, and follow the voice of their priests,—indeed a multitude of traditions, of which one scarcely knows what to think, or how far to credit them.

E. Many of them may only exhibit the natural history of the animal, of which our knowledge is too limited; others are derived from fragments of this primeval tradition, to which more and more of the marvellous and incredible has been continually adhering. These marvels have at length

become the belief of the common people, and contribute very serviceably to the inventions of the poet, and to the self-interested craft and deception of the magician and the priest. But enough for us. Throughout the East, the serpent is celebrated as a knowing, crafty brute ; and we need not prove, that it is a base and noxious one. Observe now with what correctness all these traits are brought out in this narrative. At first, he appears as a knowing, and showy, or glistening animal ; afterwards, as a base deceiver, creeping slyly upon the earth, and aiming his blow at the heel. At first he eats the food of the Gods, knows the secret powers of nature, and has fellowship with the Elohim ; afterwards he creeps upon his belly, and is condemned to eat the dust of the earth. So far is he from being immortal, that man has power to bruise his head, while he can only repay it with a blow upon the heel. At first, a friend of Eve, whom he wishes to make a Goddess ; then, an enemy of her and her children, so that the mother of serpents is treated, as it were, as the proper enemy of her whole race. Can you conceive a more instructive contrast in one animal ? A base worm ! and shall it aspire to teach man who is formed in the image of God ? The folly of man in imitating so degraded a being is placed in the strongest light.

A. Immediately after the fact also, the man sees his serpent-seducer as he is involved in the curse, which is here pronounced upon him. The story is finely turned ; and if the facts related ever happened, the man could not have had a more instructive apologue. The tree, the serpent, the action are the teachers here, and the words only express what alas ! experience too clearly taught. From this view I can perceive the error of those, who have puzzled their brains to determine whether the serpent had feet before this, or a human understanding to perceive the import of the curse, &c.

E. The Rabbins have still more mischievous conceits ; but let us not disturb these people, for we have still many traits of this instructive picture to bring out. The serpent

was, by means of the tree, to open the man's eyes, and to give him the clear-sightedness and wisdom of the Elohim. Why was this? Why betray man with this hope in particular? Do you remember what we have before said of the Elohim?

A. I understand, I believe, to what you refer. By the Elohim you suppose to be meant those beings, who, more knowing than men, with open vision look upon the secrets of nature, and, as it were, behind the curtain, listen to the working of its hidden powers.

E. The existence of such powers of knowledge is a wide spread faith among the Orientals, who strive after this mysterious knowledge of nature, as we once did after the philosopher's stone. It is incredible what stories and fables respecting this hidden wisdom have been handed down from the highest antiquity. Here it grows upon a particular tree, now it is concealed in a figure, a seal, a talisman; then the fowls of heaven prate of it, but for the most part it is spirits, Genii, who feed on the fragrance of the flowers, with this food of the Gods partake also the knowledge of the Gods, and here and there—especially under compulsion—impart their wisdom to individual men. The moral instruction of the Orientals also has taken a very peculiar direction in precepts and poetical fictions associated with these traditions.

A. Even their precepts also?

E. They always warn men to shun forbidden arts, and carefully to distinguish this false and hurtful knowledge from the true, the sole and simple wisdom. I could adduce for you here a multitude of sayings, in which the fear of God, and the fear of demons, obedience to God, and fleeing before the enchantments of false knowledge, are placed in opposition to each other. That is the tree of life, this the forbidden tree of a false and depraving knowledge. But let us return to our history. Is it not such, or do you prefer to consider it a fable?

A. I cannot deny that I do.

E. I would like to see then with how much consequentness you can connect together in it the causes with their effects. For it is the essence of a fable, that it be a consistent whole, and that what is represented in act be represented in a manner picturable to the sense. Take the tree, then, in any one of the senses, which the language admits, and there still remain superfluous and irreconcilable traits. It is a tree, to which, as God declared, either obedience or death was attached ; yet death did not follow, but rather effects of a different kind not included in the threatening. If we attach knowledge to the tree under the same notion of knowledge which the serpent held out, to make the fable consistent, we must admit the language of God to be untrue ; for to some extent at least, the promise of the serpent seems to have come to pass. Their eyes were in fact opened, and they became, as God himself declares, like the Elohim. Why then had he forbidden them the tree ? And why does this newly acquired knowledge, like that of the Elohim, bring after it thorns and thistles, agriculture and the pains of childbirth ? Why too must these new Elohim go out of Paradise ? It would rather seem, that they ought to remain with their brethren the Elohim. Are we to suppose then, that God in reality feared, as they had tasted of the tree of knowledge, they might also eat of the tree of life, and become immortal, as they had become knowing, against his will ? Your fable needs a defender.

A. I leave that for you.

E. That I cannot become, so long as it must be considered a fable. But suppose it to be a tradition, a narrative of an instructive history, the facts of which actually took place with the parents of the human race, and every thing follows naturally. Begin the explanation where we left it, "they were naked and were not ashamed ;" could men continue in this state ?

A. Some enthusiasts say so. They hold that Eve would not have conceived and borne children as women now do ;

that this is the wages of sin, and an equivalent for the punishment of death.

E. So Eve was not formed, as women of the present day are ; for in their formation they are designed to become mothers ; and the first blessing pronounced expressly shows, that men were formed with the intention that they should people the earth. The earth also is fitted to be the habitation of men, and the sweat of the brow belongs to the cultivation of the earth, as necessarily as pain to childbearing. In short, till the authors, to whom you refer, show us another earth, and another humanity, than we are acquainted with, and than that to which the blessing at the creation of our race obviously had reference, we may leave them to dream of Adam's glass body, and a Paradise under the North pole. We have said too much of them already.

A. You suppose then, that God actually created man for the condition, in which we now find him ?

E. And who else should have formed him for it ? The Devil, the enemy of man, surely did not, and God, who formed him out of the dust, necessarily foresaw the development, which took place. He weighed the dust in his hand, and knew what would come out of it ; he measured the powers of his soul, and knew every error of which it was susceptible. In truth, if we deny this, we make ourselves unworthy of our reason, of our humanity, and of our earth. No philosophy is more odious to me, than that which employs every art to put out a man's eyes, in order that he may not know himself. The poetry of the Hebrews, indeed the philosophy of both Testaments, knows nothing of this sublime nonsense. In none of the Psalms, or of the prophets, is this history introduced in such a sense, and that shown from it, which this pseudo-philosophy would have it show. Adam, says the scripture, sinned first, and we all sin as he did ; we must therefore die also, as he died. As Eve was betrayed, so we are betrayed, and estranged from our simplicity—this the scripture affirms, but not that so soon as he sinned he lost his humanity, and suffer-

ed for himself and his posterity ten thousand actus and raptus, new powers introduced, and former ones taken away, in his understanding and will, his senses and all his members. What he did suffer is here plainly described.

A. What then was it, and how did it follow from the prohibition and the tree in question ?

E. Admit the supposition, that it was a noxious but not a deadly tree, of which God had warned them not to eat. We may then conclude, that God denominated the effect of it death, partly as opposed to that of the tree of life, and partly as the severest threatening, by which he could restrain man from the use of it. In the mean time, He who knoweth the bounds of all things, foresaw this aberration from duty, and, since it would have been inconsistent with his wisdom to create a human race to no other end but to perish in the first moment of existence, he placed in the way, and as the occasion of his disobedience, a tree which, in the plan contemplated for humanity, both answered a present purpose, and must serve after a sort to introduce his subsequent condition.

A. I do not understand you.

E. The fruit of the tree inflamed his appetites, gave an impulse to his blood, placed him in a state of fear and inquietness, of terrour and astonishment. This state of his feelings the Creator made use of, and pointed out to his children the consequences of their first transgression, to themselves and their seducer. This latter he made an object of abhorrence to them, and even from their present feelings, before inexperienced, predicted for themselves in future, new scenes of life. The maid of Paradise must hereafter become a mother ; she, who had hitherto been the betrothed bride of Adam, was to become Eve, the housewife, the ministering attendant of the living beings, who by her should be born into the light of the world. The quiet dweller in Paradise, who had spent only the first period of his youth in this nursery of his earliest development, had now more toilsome labours before him,

which yet belonged also to his proper destiny ; and finally the painful word death, was announced, and for this fate also he was prepared in the tenderest manner. In short, his first error was made under a paternal guidance, to promote the progress of his being ; the punishment, which God inflicted, was the chastisement of a father, a blessing in disguise. The household door must be opened for man, and his own fault must be the occasion of opening it.

A. What a new aspect does the history in this view of it assume. Now the whole of it interprets itself, and no feature of it is useless ; even in the tone of the punishment inflicted, all is fatherly and forbearing ; it is a progressive history of humanity. The father permits his child to fail in his weakest point, to break for itself the apple of future cares and discords, and to owe it to itself, that it is no longer in Paradise, in which it could not and should not always continue. The man has, by his own arbitrary and self-willed conduct, turned himself out of his father's house ; he must now be his own master, and his own provider.

E. Do you see nothing more in this history, no analogy with our present condition ?

A. A continued analogy. Our life also passes through the same conditions. We too sin like Adam, and like him are punished, that is, brought into a state of greater hardships, but yet a necessary one.

E. Can you draw no conclusion from it with regard to the proper nature of evil ?

A. That it consists primarily in a deviation from truth and simplicity of heart, through alien, indefensible and delusive principles of action. The commandment is always at hand, the law is ever present, either in us or without us, in our consciousness and conscience, or in a positive obligation of outward duty. The serpent, which seduces us, too, is always there, and always tempting—the inclinations of the senses and of our sensual nature, the false representations and illusive

promises of the too confident and proud understanding, or all these together. The consequences of transgression, too, are ever the same ; and I trust in God, that the chastisements also, which he awards to each of his erring creatures, will prove to be paternal favours, dispensations of Providence for our best good, though for the present not joyous but grievous.

E. Here we see human nature, in its general character, and in its various relations, just as the poetry of the Orientals in later times has represented it. At first we have nature, Paradise, love, innocence, a kingdom of beasts, in short every thing with which the fancy of youth so delights to occupy itself ; in the midst stands the tree, by which man's obedience was to be tried, and to which, in the moral poetry of the East, every thing is referred ; and from the eating of its fruit commence those evils, which are lamented in such touching elegies in Job and in the Psalms,—toil, bondage, sickness and death. I might indeed denominate this short chapter an encyclopædia of humanity, and wish in vain, that I were able to set forth, in poetry or prose, its every condition and relation in a manner as free and natural, as that with which it is unfolded in this simple narrative. 'The fables of Prometheus and Pandora are poor in comparison. But one object in this history yet remains, and a very poetical one.

A. 'The Cherubim with the flaming sword ? 'That I suppose means the steeds of the tempest, the horses of the thunderer.*

E. 'The horses of the thunderer ? and at so early a period ? How improbable a representation must it have been in a tradition of those primeval times !—a tradition, too, that pictures every thing else so entirely correspondent to those

* The view of the Cherubim, here referred to and controverted, was maintained about the middle of the last century, by J. D. Michaelis, in a dissertation, *de Cherubis equis tonantibus*, and at the time, when this work was written, was thought more worthy of attention, than it would be now. Tr.

times. Did Adam know any thing of these horses ? What meaning would they have for him, and how came he by such an image ? And moreover what have they to do here ? Tempest-steeds with a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life !

A. You do indeed make me somewhat at a loss. Yet such is the image expressed by the Cherubim throughout the poetry of the Hebrews.

E. I know not a single passage, which gives even plausibility to it. In one of the later prophets* God is represented with horses, but these are by no means the Cherubim. There he is described with a war-chariot, to which indeed horses are properly attached, but in this image he is not represented as thundering. He stands upon his war-chariot, and measures out the land to the Israelites ; before him goes the pestilence, and birds of prey are flying to his feet. He beholds and drives asunder the nations, and a panick fear falls upon the tents of the land of Midian. Now he draws his bow and shoots forth his arrows, he smites and dashes in pieces his enemies ; in short, he wields the whole armoury of ancient warfare. He returns in majestick array ; and his horses go, as they came, before his triumphant car, through the sea, through the heaps of great waters. Is this the same image with the other, and does he here speak of the Cherubim ?

A. But the Greeks gave his chariot and horses to Jupiter, the thunderer, and Virgil has beautiful representations of the sort.

E. Is Jupiter Jehovah ? Are the Greeks Hebrews ? Is Virgil a Hebrew poet ? The Peruvians represent thunder as the shattering of a vessel, which the fair Goddess of rain holds in her hand. Her brother comes and dashes it in pieces, then it thunders, and the rain pours down. Such is

* Hab. iii. 8.

the mythology of the Peruvians, but what would be the effect of attempting by the aid of this to interpret the poetry of the Hebrews? Do we then know nothing of the Cherubim from the language of the Hebrew poets themselves? Are they not distinctly represented to us as works of art?

A. Let us go through an examination of the passages; and first of the form, in which they are represented standing over the ark of the covenant.*

E. There they have wings and faces, look down upon the covering of the ark, and overshadow the mercy-seat. This is neither the figure nor the position of your thunder-bearing steeds. And probably in the same figure, in which they stood here, they were also wrought in the tapestry or carved on the walls. In Solomon's temple they stood in the same form, only more large and magnificent. The description is wholly a repetition of the same.†

A. But after all there is not much described in it, for how many different forms might agree in having faces and wings?

E. Look then at the temple of Ezechiel.‡ In his description the Cherubim have the heads of a man and of a lion, without any conception of the form of a horse. To the same prophet the Cherubim appeared in the clouds.¶ One Cherub stretches forth his hand, and it is a man's hand, which takes the fire from the altar. The countenance appears, and by the comparison and distinction made, its form becomes obvious. Each of the creatures has four faces, those of an ox, of a man, of a lion, and of an eagle, according to the side from which they were seen. These four faces John saw also, only not all on the same animal. Therefore—

A. What then do you infer from the form?

E. Two inferences follow from it beyond dispute. First, that the Cherubim are a compound of several distinct ani-

* Ex. xxv. 17. 18.—xxxvi. 8. 35. † 1 Ki. vi. 23. 2 Chr. iii. 7.

‡ Ezech. xli. 18.

¶ Ezech. i. 10. x. 14.

mals, and second, that among these the figure of the horse is not found at all.

A. Is there no other passage ?

E. One more, and that a decisive one in regard to the present question. The proud king of Tyre is called by Ezechiel* a Cherub, who dwells in Eden, in the garden of the Elohim, upon the holy mountain, and walks up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. This is employed as the highest representation of his might, and of his proud magnificence. All the splendour of precious stones is employed for his ornament, and the day of his creation is a day of rejoicing. He appears as a creature exalted and perfect in his ways. Now we know what forms of the brute creation were employed in the primeval world, and especially, by the Orientals of these regions, as symbols of magnificence and pride—precisely those four, which are included in the composition of the Cherubim, the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle. The proverb of the Hebrews respecting them is well known.—“ There are four creatures of stateliness and pride in the world, the lion among the wild beasts, the ox among the tame, the eagle among birds, and man above all.”

A. But it seems to me, that this proverb does not decide with certainty for those earliest times ; for the composition of the Cherubim does not appear to include uniformly the same elements.

E. As all forms of art, especially when used for embellishment, vary in some degree with the times ; yet the spirit of the composition is not to be mistaken. Ezechiel places his king of Tyre, where the most ancient cherubim stood, on the holy mountain of God in Paradise, and gives him a form and character of splendour, of wisdom, and over-awing magnificence. He derived this impression probably from his actual appearance, and very naturally employed, to express it, the image of the Cherubim, which, on account of their fearful

* Ezech. xxviii. 14. See Appendix II.

and awe-inspiring forms, were placed to keep the way of the tree of life. It seems to me, that this description of Ezechiel, in connexion with the other traditions of the Orientals, gives us so distinct a conception of these shapes of wonder, that we may venture to leave out of view altogether the representation which you suggested.

A. To what other traditions do you allude?

E. Do you know of no other fabled form of the brute creation, that lived upon the mountains of the primeval world, in the very region in which our account places Paradise, and guarded there the treasures of the past?

A. The dragons and griffins of antiquity guarded treasures of gold or golden apples.

E. That was a tradition of a later period, or more Northern tribes. The Orientals have a winged animal that dwells upon the mountain Kaf, and had many a war with the giants of the olden time. It is a creature, they say, of reason and religion, speaks all the languages of the world, has the wisdom of the sphinx, the artifice of the griffin, and guards the way to the treasures of Paradise. It is a prodigy among the works of God, a creature not to be overreached by craft, nor to be overcome by power. The sphinx of the Egyptians, the dragon of the Greeks, and the griffin of the Northern mythology, are all of one and the same composition, modified only by differences of age and country. In tracing the history of these, you will see the later fables, and marvellous tales of the guardians of the tree of immortality at the gates of Paradise, the dazzling forms of terrifick grandeur upon the holy mountains, with the flaming sword which turns every way, just as Ezechiel has described the Cherub. Every nation has retained the same in poetry and traditions, added to it from time to time, and modified it by its own fictions. For us it will be sufficient to trace the history of the Cherubim in the poetry of the Hebrews. At first they appear here as a guard with a flaming sword (not as destroyers to lay waste Paradise,

as some have fancied in contradiction to the literal sense). They appear again in the tabernacle made by Moses, who, perhaps because he discovered a resemblance between them and the sphinx, placed them after the Egyptian form upon the ark of the covenant. From the ark of the covenant they were transferred to the clouds; for since the divine glory descended upon them there, they must be placed as its supporters here also. It thus became a peculiar poetick image of the Hebrews, and at last appeared in the visions of the prophets. The transfer of the Cherub, which was originally a work of art upon the ark of the covenant, to the clouds, as a creature bearing up the throne of Jehovah, was indeed very naturally suggested by the expression, "God enthroned upon the Cherubim," which occurs, as a designation of the Divine Majesty, even in the books of Samuel.* So soon as it had been applied to the representation of God in the clouds, the imagination of the poet had full scope for employing it in its pictures of celestial objects, and David seems to have been the first, who availed himself of the image.† Yet so far is the Cherub, as employed by David in describing a thunder storm, from suggesting the tempest-steed, that even had some ground existed in other passages, it must have been excluded from this. David's Cherub is a winged animal, upon which God flies, and corresponds in the parallelism with the wings of the wind, while the thunder and lightning are described by their own proper imagery. Even in the age of Isaiah,‡ God who sitteth upon the Cherubim, is no more than the old Mosaick representation, which occurs in the books of Samuel and the Psalms. When God appeared to him, there were no Cherubim in the form of his manifestation.¶ It was not till later times, and out of Judaea, among the captives by the river Chebar, that the old poetick image came to appear in prophet-

* 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi 2. † Ps. xviii. 11. (Appendix III.)

‡ Isa. xxxvii. 16. ¶ Isa. vi. 1—8.

ick visions ; and here the Cherubim are seen in their fullest splendour.* It was however no thunderer's car which they bore, and much less drew after them. They bore up the throne of divine majesty, and above them was as it were sapphire, that is, the clear and luminous heavens. Like the rainbow in the clouds, so was the appearance of the brightness round about, tranquillity, majesty, and grandeur in their most impressive form, but certainly no picture of a thunder storm.

A. The Cherubim, then, according to your theory, had three distinct periods, as works of art in the temple, as represented in the clouds, and as seen in the visions of the prophets.

E. To these you may add also that of their mythological representation in the tradition of Paradise, for this was the original ground of all. Had they not been exhibited in this tradition, Moses would not have placed them upon the ark of the covenant, and so they would not have been transferred to the clouds, nor finally have appeared in prophetick vision. You will readily see moreover how, in the course of these changes in the mode of its use, the image itself must also experience a change. In the most ancient tradition it was a creature inspiring wonder and awe, in the tabernacle a lifeless work of art, in the Psalms a poetick image, and finally in the prophetick visions a ζῶον, a celestial creature, the bearer up of the divine majesty. The difference of use, and the distinct sphere of each, Ezechiel himself gives. In the heavens he describes their forms, as living and majestic, with their four marvellous faces ; in his temple he leaves them only two of these, either because he would not represent a human countenance in the temple, in order to avoid idolatry, or because he doubted respecting the skill of the artificers. In the tabernacle of Moses both circumstances were combined, and the form in which the Cherubim were there represented, was undoubtedly very simple.

* Ezech. i and x.

A. The conception of the Chérubim, then, as we learn from these views, was, in its leading character, that of a creature of marvellous and supernatural form, a compound of several distinct animals.

E. That is undeniable. It appears also, from the description of their form, which Josephus gives as traditionary, that the Cherubim were winged animals (*ζωα*) of a form, to which nothing seen by human eyes had any resemblance, a fabulous compound of the majestick, the terrible, the powerful and the marvellous. Undoubtedly within its own limits, embracing as it did, in its elements, the four proudest forms of earth and air, the eagle, the ox, the lion, and man, it varied, according as the poet introduced it in his imagery, or art could mould it into its own shapes. The Arabick traditions also mention respecting the Cherubim of the ark, that they were a winged being in human form, with a look, which was dazzling like a flame of fire, and in time of war sent a tempestuous wind upon the enemy—a fable, the ground of which we may find in Biblical history.

A. But how do you account for the origin of the first and most ancient mythology of the Cherubim at the gates of Paradise?

E. Of this also the same universal tradition gives a very probable explanation. That these Cherubim were stationed to keep the way to the tree of life, to the garden of the Hesperides, is the unanimous report. That the Cherub of the Orientals had his station upon a mountain, and walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, is the testimony of Ezechiel, and is confirmed by traditions, which prevail throughout the East. They all assign him his place upon a mountain of farther Asia, behind which lies Paradise, probably in the same region in which Moses has placed his also. Do you know of no other mythology which speaks of a mountain of God?

A. I know of none.

E. It is known and familiar to all the Eastern nations

from Thibet to the Red Sea, a mountain on which dwell the Gods, the Lahi, the Elohim, the Demons and happy men, and which some few traditions, that have found their way into Hebrew poetry, place toward the North. Who was the king, that in the ironical representation of Isaiah says,

I will ascend up into heaven,
Above the stars of God will I exalt my throne ;
I will sit upon the mount of the congregation,
Upon the heights of the North ?

This mythology could not have originated with the Hebrews, since they have Sinai and Zion, for their holy mountains ; and you know, with how much zeal Isaiah exalts his holy mount Zion above all the mountains of the earth. But in the discourse of Elihu* God comes also from the North in golden splendour. He breaks forth from his holy congregation, or assemblage of Gods, as he did to the Israelites from Mount Sinai. Perhaps this mountain of the North was the same mount of the Cherubim, on which the King of Tyre in Ezechiel walked up and down before the garden of God, and in the midst of the stones of fire.

A. And how did the notion of Cherubim upon this dazzling mountain originate ?

E. It was at first undoubtedly, as simple as the tradition of Paradise itself. Men were banished from it, and a lofty mountain-range lay probably between them and the happy residence of their childhood. This too, abounded perhaps in wild animals, of which the adventurous wanderers, who would have searched out the way thither, brought back marvellous and frightful tales. Above, upon the mountain, hung the thunder-clouds, or it may be the mountain sent forth volcanick flame. These, mingling in the tale of the wanderer, would naturally enough be combined, and thus form the fabulous

* This will be understood by referring to the author's interpretation of Job, Chap. xxxvii. 22, as given in the fourth dialogue p. 87. Ta.

animal, with a flaming sword, which turned every way, a compound of many phantoms. Or it may be, that, when the first men were compelled to go out from Paradise, and cast a look behind them, they beheld flames shooting here and there, with other dazzling meteorick sights, and wild forms of the brute creation, and thus received an impression, which they transmitted, and which afterwards, from seeing the mountain and from the tales of travellers, of adventurers, and poets, shaped itself to a creature of strange and marvellous form. But be that as it may, there is at least no ground for the fiction, that the Cherubim carried man from Paradise, as poets and painters have sung and pictured it. God himself removed them out of the garden, and the Cherubim came as its guardians.

A. But was not Elijah taken up to heaven by a chariot and horses of fire ?

E. That too was a war-chariot, a triumphal car, not a mythological thunder-car, much less a Cherub. So Elisha understood it, who witnessed the phenomenon. The import of his exclamation was, "Thou hast been the champion of Israel, his chariot and horse ; therefore also heroick and war-like is thy ascent, and as a conqueror dost thou appear in the heavens." So when the chariots of God are said to be thousands of thousands, the image is taken from war and triumphal chariots, as the whole Psalm shows. God came forth from Sinai to go before Israel, and to conquer the land ; the mountains tremble, kings flee before him. He divides the spoil, and soars aloft with his chariots ; he carries his captives away in triumph, and distributes his gifts. It is the same representation, which we saw in the imagery of Habakkuk, and which, in describing the conquest of the land of Israel, is set forth in the finest songs of triumph.

A. But what other image do you give me, as a representation of the Father ?

E. The image of a reproving father. This image still presents itself to the minds of all children, and is found in

the simple history itself, in which the thunder-horses have been sought. "They heard the voice of Jehovah walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Nothing is more probable, than that this voice was the sound of thunder, and that by this expression the image was introduced and continued in the poetry of the Hebrews. And if so would it not be unreasonable to suppose that an image, so accordant in its primeval simplicity and artlessness with the child-like and artless character of the narrative, and one so complex, bearing the artificial character of a later age, were used with reference to one and the same thing? I have now exhibited to you, I believe, the history of the Cherubim, in its origin and progress, and with adequate proof; and that is all that can be expected with regard to a mythological conception in poetry so ancient. Read and compare, and you will no longer have any doubts on the subject.* We see in them mysterious and incomprehensible creatures, of superhuman wisdom and majestick form, bearing up the canopy, on which rested the throne of the Most High; and by whom could this be more appropriately sustained, than by the symbols of all that is sublime and awe-inspiring on the earth, combined with an idea of the inconceivable and unapproachable, of profound knowledge, and unuttered wisdom.

A P P E N D I X I.

Ezekiel's Vision of God enthroned above the Cherubim.

I looked, and lo! a whirlwind from the North†
 Came sweeping onward, a vast cloud, that rolled
 Its volumes, charged with gleaming fire, along,
 And cast its dazzling splendours all around.
 Now from within shone forth, what seemed the glow

* See Appendix I.

† Here too, as in Job. xxxvii, 22, the vision of God comes from the North, and probably also from the mountains of the Gods. Isa. xiv. 14. Ezech. xxviii. 14. Again in the vision of Zechariah vi. 1—8 the horses, which have gone to and fro through the earth, go towards the North as their place of rest.

Of gold and silver,* molten in the flame,
 And in the midst thereof the form expressed,
 As of a four-fold living thing—a shape,†
 That yet contained the semblance of a man.
 With four-fold visage each, and each four wings,
 On upright limbs and cloven feet they stood,‡
 And shone with splendour as of burnished brass.
 Withdrawn beneath their wings, on every side
 Were human hands, for each four-sided seemed,
 And four-fold had their faces and their wings.
 Then, wing to wing, and each to each close joined,
 They turned not in their going, but went forth,
 Advancing each with look and course unchanged.§

* Properly an amber-coloured metal, compounded of the two, of peculiar brilliancy, and highly valued in ancient times, but for which we have no name. Tr.

† In this view I have adhered strictly to the sense of Herder, who understands the whole as one living creature. See *Ezech. x. 15. 20.* and *Gesenius' Lexicon.* Tr.

‡ In the form of the Cherubim, particularly in its having the cloven feet of the ox, we cannot but recognize a resemblance to the sphinx, though this latter was modified in accordance with the forms of Egyptian mythology and art.

§ An image of the omnipresence of the throne of God, and of the unreturning progress of his working throughout the natural world. [It could not of course be understood from this, that each face, or even each of the four-fold forms of the living creature, went forward by itself, in such a way as to separate the one from the other; nor that there was no change of direction in the motion of the whole. The whole obviously moved as one, and below they are described as going and returning. The meaning then must be, that each several face looked constantly in the same direction, and when it advanced moved in a direct line without turning. In the lines following that, to which this note is attached, I have exhibited the direction of the different faces more distinctively perhaps, than the author intended to do. My conception of the matter is, that, as the whole approached him from the North, the human face, in each of the four-fold forms, was directed towards the prophet, those of the lion and ox, to the right and left, and the eagle's backward, or towards the North. Thus the four human faces looked to the South, those of the lion to the East, and so of the others, being directed to the four

In all the four-fold visaged four was seen
 The face of man; the right a lion, and an ox*
 The left distinguished, and to all the four
 Belonged an eagle's visage. By itself
 Distinct, their faces and their wings they each
 Extended upward, joining thus, it seemed,
 Two wings for flight, while two their bodies veiled.†
 With course direct, and forward each advanced,
 Whither the spirit moved they went, nor over turned.

The several living forms, like glowing coals
 Appeared. What seemed the flame of torches played
 Between them, and the dazzling light of fire.
 From out the fire went gleaming lightnings forth;
 And quick, as lightnings flash, the living forms
 Were here and there, went forth and back returned.‡

cardinal points, and those of the same kind always to the same point, whether in motion or at rest. When therefore the whole moved in the direction of the human face, it went South without turning or changing its direction; but when the whole went North, or in the direction of the eagle's face, the human must necessarily move backwards, and so of the others, but each always looked in the same direction, or to the same cardinal point, and went forward in no other. This view seems to me to agree with the original of the tenth verso, and with the whole description in this chapter; and though in Ezech. x. 14. the face of a Cherub (see the following note) is named as the first, it seems probable at least from the context, that the whole was seen in a different direction, or towards the East. [Tr.]

* What the prophet here calls the face of an ox, in Chap. x. 14. he calls the face of a Cherub; and it was perhaps commonly considered as peculiarly such, from the fact, that the form of the ox was the predominant one in the whole composition, as the aspect of the sphinx shows.

† This veiling of their bodies, as appears from the vision of Isaiah, Chap. vi. 2. was a symbol of their unworthiness to serve the Lord of Creation.

‡ I have omitted here the description of the wheels beneath the throne, as indeed they are not found in the description of John, Rev. iv. They serve however to show, that the Cherubim did not draw the throne of the Divine Majesty, as horses harnessed before it, but bore it up as

Above their heads, high over-arching, seemed
 An azure firmament outspread, like clear
 Transparent crystal, that inspired with awe.
 Approaching near the firmament, their wings,
 Extending wing to wing, were upward spread.
 With two they bore themselves aloft, with two
 They veiled their bodies round. And as they went,
 I heard the rushing sound of wings, like rush
 Of mighty waters, or the distant sound
 Of thunder, the dread voice of Shaddai.*
 They went with sound of tumult, like an host,
 And when they stopped, they closed again their wings,
 For when, from the o'er-arching firmament
 Above a voice was uttered forth, they stood
 With wings depending, and close veiled around.
 And high upraised above the firmament
 There seemed the sapphire splendour of a throne,
 And on the throne there sat, what seemed the form
 Of man. It shone with amber glow of gold
 And silver intermixed, as burning fire.
 Both inward and without, and from the loins
 Above and underneath it seemed like fire,
 And shone with radiant lustre all around.
 As shines the rainbow in the day of rain,
 So seemed the lustre of that radiant form.

winged creatures. The Cherubim and the living wheels entirely correspond to each other, as well in regard to number, as to the rapidity and direction with which they moved.

* Obviously the thunder is distinguished from the sound and still more from the essential being of the Cherubim. It is here introduced simply as an image by way of comparison, just as rushing waters and the moving of an army are introduced. It is here called the voice of Shaddai, as it generally is in Hebrew poetry. Even when the Cherubim stand still, and let fall their wings, it thunders in the firmament above them. In the vision of John also, Rev. iv. 5. the thunder proceeds from the throne, and they contribute nothing to it. They are the bearers up of the Majesty of God, the image of all that is majestick in his creation, serving and unceasingly praising him; the symbols of hidden wisdom. When the seals of the book are opened, (Rev. vi.) these living creatures call to the apostle, in vision, to come and see what was contained in the book.

The aspect of Jehovah's Majesty
I saw in this, and fell upon my face
And heard the voice of one that spake.

APPENDIX II.

Lamentation over the downfall of the King of Tyre under the image of a Cherub.*

Oh thou, the crown of art, with wisdom filled,†
And perfect in thy form, in Eden thou
Hast been, the garden of the Elohim.
With every precious stone wast thou adorned,
With ruby, emerald, and the diamond's fire,
With hyacinth and jasper, onyx stone,
And sapphire, and with gold. They welcomed thee,
The day of thy creation, with the voice
Of joy and praise, with drum and trumpet's sound.‡
I placed thee for the Cherub, that outstretched
Its wings, and guarded Eden; thou didst stand
Upon the holy mountain of the Gods,
The Elohim, and up as didst walk
Amidst the stones of fire, all thy ways

* Ezech. xxviii. 12. This passage is an imitation of the lamentation of Isaiah over the King of Babylon, Isa. xiv. 2. a translation of which will be found in one of the subsequent dialogues. It is placed here on account of the description of the Cherub, which Ezechiel, according to his custom in using figurative language, has carried out in detail.

† Tyre was the richest commercial city of its day, and as the terms, Phœnician or Sidonian work, was in ancient times the common name of works of art, so the object here represented could not be more affectingly bewailed, than under the form of a rich and finished work of art.

‡ Perhaps this applies, as matter of fact, to the beautiful situation of Tyre, which seemed purposely designed for trade and magnificence. As a figurative representation, it is a well-known custom of the East to accompany birth-day and other celebrations of that sort, with musick and sound of kettle-drums.

|| I know not whether these stones of fire, or glowing stones, are to be considered precious stones, or whether they are something accompanying the flame of the sword, that turned every way. I could wish, that the mythology of this mountain of the Gods were explained by more numerous traditions, and hope it may be so hereafter.

Hast thou been unpolluted, from the day
 Of thy creation, till transgression now
 Is found in thee. By all thy merchandise
 Hast thou been filled with violence and fraud,
 And therefore will I thrust thee, as profane,
 From out the mountain of the Elohim.
 Thee, the protecting Cherub, I destroy,
 And cast thee from amidst the stones of fire.
 Thine heart was lifted up with ornaments
 Of beauty, by the brightness of thy form
 Wast thou despoiled of wisdom; therefore now
 Will I reject and throw thee to the ground,
 And make of thee a gazing-stock for kings.*
 By all thy many crimes, and by the fraud
 Of traffick in thy merchandise, hast thou
 With shame defiled the glory of thy name;
 And from thy bosom shall go forth a fire,†
 That shall devour thee. Thou shalt be but dust
 And ashes, in the sight of all, that look
 Upon thee. They among the nations round,
 That know thy greatness, with astonishment
 Shall see thy downfall. Thou hast been the pride
 Of earth, but henceforth shalt thou be no more.

APPENDIX III.

Description of the thunder.†

* In imitation of Isaiah, xiv. 16.

† Perhaps this trait also in the picture of the Cherub has reference to the devouring flame, that turned every way. It is the way of Ezechiel to fill up his pictures even to the minutest point. The fire of the Cherub, if such be the meaning, is here turned against himself.

‡ Ps. xviii. This is introduced here to illustrate the mythology of the thunder and of the Cherubim. The whole movement of the Psalm is beautiful. David, in imminent danger of death, calls upon God, and his cry is heard without delay. God delivers him by means of a thunder-storm, perhaps in the midst of battle, from death and from his enemies. That death is represented here, as a hunter with nets and cords, is well known. The other images, of the rivers of Belial, and the kingdom of the dead, will be explained in the following dialogue.

The floods of death encompassed me.
 The rivers of Belial filled me with dread.
 Around me were the cords of the grave,*
 The snares of death were before me.

In my distress I said I will call on the Lord,
 And unto my God will I cry aloud.
 He will hear me from his palace,
 My strong cry shall reach his ear.

Then the earth shook and trembled,
 The foundations of the mountains moved,
 And were shaken, because he was wroth.
 There went up smoke out of his nostrils;†

* The expression "cords of the grave" is sufficiently harsh, but could not well be softened without losing the personification, which Herder intended to exhibit. (See the previous note.) Fidelity seemed to require, that I should exhibit this, though I like better in regard to the sense of the original, the opinion of De Wette, that no personification was intended. Tr.

† A tempest, perhaps accompanied by an earthquake, is here pictured forth with all its striking phenomena. The earth shakes. The smoke goes forth from his nostrils, that is (v. 16.) the violent wind loaded with vapour, which precedes the tempest; now the lightnings commence; the heavens become darker and more depressed, and seem to sink towards the earth; the storm sweeps along with increasing fury; the darkness becomes intense, interrupted only by the lightning's flash. At length the loud thunders are heard, the lightnings are redoubled, and shoot forth in all directions, speeding themselves onward. All this, in its several successive traits, is clothed in continuous mythological imagery. The ruler of the tempest casts forth in his wrath, smoke from his nostrils, and then fire from his mouth, by which the icy arch of heaven is made to glow like burning coals. Now he inclines the canopy of the heavens, as it were, towards the earth, wraps himself in the darkness of night, and shoots forth his arrows, hurls abroad his lightnings, and wings them with speed. In this rich imagery, by which the thunder is represented, the Cherub is no more than a correspondent to the wings of the storm, as the parallelism shows. He is merely the vehicle, on which God moves, just as he is often said to move on the wings of the wind. In this Psalm, then, the leading image, by which the thunder is represented, is that of the voice of an angry and reproving God—a figure, that in the 29th Psalm alone occurs seven times.

Fire from his mouth devoured around,
 Coals were kindled before it.

He bowed the heavens and came down,
 Darkness was under his feet,
 He rode upon a Cherub and did fly,
 He flew on the wings of the storm.

Now he wrapped himself in darkness,
 Clouds on clouds enclosed him round.
 At the brightness before him the clouds vanished,
 Hail-stones fell, and coals of fire.

The Lord thundered in the heavens,
 The Highest uttered forth his voice,
 There were hail-stones and coals of fire.
 Then he shot forth his arrows around,
 Redoubled his lightnings, and sped them forward,
 The depths of the sea were laid open,
 The foundations of the earth revealed,
 At the reproving voice of the Lord,
 At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.*

He reached down from on high,
 And took hold upon me ;
 From deep waters he drew me forth,
 And freed me from my strong enemies,
 From foes, that were too powerful for me.

APPENDIX IV.

The voice of Jehovah.*

Give to Jehovah, ye worshippers of idols,
 Give to Jehovah honour and power.
 Give to Jehovah the glory of his name,
 Worship Jehovah, arrayed in his Majesty.

The voice of Jehovah is above the waters,†

* Ps. xxix.

† The parallelism shows that these waters are not the Mediterranean Sea but the waters of heaven—the dense rain-clouds. In the sequel it

The God of glory thunders on high.
 Jehovah thunders upon the great waters,
 The voice of Jehovah sounds with might,
 The voice of Jehovah sounds with majesty.

The voice of Jehovah shivers the cedars,
 Jehovah shivers the cedars of Lebanon.
 He makes them to skip like a calf,
 Lebanon and Sirion like a young ox of the desert.*

The voice of Jehovah scattereth the flames,
 The voice of Jehovah shaketh the desert,
 Jehovah shaketh the desert of Kadesh.
 The voice of Jehovah maketh the hinds bring forth,
 And layeth the forest bare of its leaves.

Jehovah sitteth and poureth out the floods,
 Jehovah is enthroned as a king forever.

will be shown why Jehovah is specially represented as the God of thunder. That this Psalm is a continuous description of a tempest is too clear to be disputed.

* A wild animal of the ox kind resembling the buffalo. Tr.

DIALOGUE VII.

Tradition of the origin of man. Name taken from the notions of his tendency to dissolution, his feebleness, and relation to the earth. Elegy of Job on the destiny of man. Of the breath of God, as the sensuous image of power, in thought, word, and deed. Hymn on the strength and Godlike character of human nature. Sublime foretelling of the same in the creation. From what conception can Epic poetry impart to human nature, in its physical and spiritual relations, ideal elevation and dignity? How far has the poetry of the Bible developed this? Whether this conception be too pure and divine? Why the moral sentiments of the earliest times and the poetical expression of them must have immediate reference to God. The useful effect, which this produced. Whence the conception of a kingdom of the dead originated. Elegy concerning it. Whether it is at variance with the immortality of the soul, or rather presupposes it. Poetical view of places of burial, and of the life of those entombed in them. Poetical description of the kingdom of the shades among the Hebrews, Celts, and other nations. Whence probably originated the notion of giants in the Oriental kingdom of the dead? Why whole kingdoms and cities sleep in it. Of Belial the king of the shades, and of Scheol, his palace or kingdom. What images has this representation furnished for the New Testament? The influence of this conception on the minds of men. Language of God on the subject of immortality in nature—in revelation. Translation of Enoch. Whether it is a fragment of poetry—a reflection awakened by his premature death. Reception of the patriarchs into the unseen world, as the true friends of God. Impression produced by the conception of the congregation, the kingdom of the fathers. Two Psalms with their explanation. That the 16th Psalm was by David, and contains the notion of an eternal dwelling in the presence of God. Whether the Israelites borrowed or derived from the Egyptians the representation of the Islands of the blessed. Origin of the notion of a resurrection of the dead. Appendix containing a description of the kingdom of the dead, as represented by Job, an Arabick Song of consolation respecting the condition of one deceased, and a designation of the probable course, in which the Hebrew notions of the state of the dead were unfolded.

A considerable time intervoned, before these conversations were resumed. Alciphron had lost his best friend by death,

and his mind was oppressed with gloomy feelings. At length during an evening walk, while the setting sun was beautifully exhibiting the daily repeated image of our own departure, he began again, after some other conversation, with a subdued and melancholy tone as follows.

ALCIPHON. You have forgotten, Euthyphron, the beautiful tradition of the origin of man, with which is so nearly associated his whole earthly destiny—earth to earth. From this Adam came forth, and to this he returned, into the bosom of the mother that bore him. Earth to earth ! is re-echoed from the whole life of man. I seem, even now, to hear it reflected in the hollow sound of the last sod of earth thrown upon the grave of my friend, and I have recently found a melancholy pleasure in reading many of these Oriental poems, for which formerly I had no relish. All the terms, by which man is here designated, are indicative of nothingness and decay. He is a clayey tabernacle, which moths and worms are incessantly destroying ; a flower, which the wind passeth over and it is gone, or which the sun shines upon and it is withered. Perhaps no poetry has represented the images of this perishable and shadowy character of man in so touching a manner, and at the same time they all flow naturally out of the radical forms of the language, as if they were the original conceptions of the character and destiny of the race.

Is it a pleasure for thee to oppress,
Thus to disparage the work of thy hands ?
Consider yet, I beseech thee,
That thou hast formed me as clay,
That I must soon return to the dust.

Permit me, in this tranquil evening twilight, when the sun, the task-master of our earthly labour, is sinking beneath the horizon, and all creatures seem to be enjoying their release from an oppressive, but vain and unsatisfying toil after the perishable objects of sense, permit me to read to you an ele-

gy, which I have never myself so deeply felt as now. Job was a great and philosophick poet. He understood what the life of man is, and what it is not, and what we have to hope for in the end.

Hath not man the task of a servant on earth ?
 Are not his days the days of an hireling ?
 As the servant longeth for the shade,
 And the hireling looketh for his reward,
 So to me have evil months fallen,
 And wearisome nights been counted out to me.
 When I lay myself down, I say
 When shall I rise again ?
 The night is irksome to me,
 I am wearied with restless dreams,
 Till the dawning of the morning.
 My flesh is clothed with worms and decay,
 My skin becometh closed and healed up,
 But breaketh forth again in new sores.
 My days have flown, and are passed away
 Swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
 They failed when hope was gone.

Oh ! remember, that my life is a breath,
 Mine eyes shall never turn back
 To see good upon the earth.
 The eye, that seeketh, shall not find me,
 Thine eye will seek me, but I am no more.

As a cloud wasteth and vanisheth away,
 So man goeth down to the grave,
 And cometh up again no more.
 He returneth not into his house,
 And the place of his dwelling
 Shall know him no more forever.
 Therefore will I not refrain my mouth,
 I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,
 I will cry out in the bitterness of my soul.
 Am I the river and its crocodile,
 That thou settest a watch over me ?
 If I say my bed shall comfort me,

My couch shall relieve my sorrow,
 Then thou scarest me with dreams,
 And terrifiest me with visions,
 So that my soul chooseth death,
 Death, rather than this frail body.

I am weary of life, I would not live always.
 Let me alone, for my days are vanity.
 What is man, that he is so great to thee,
 And thou settest thine heart towards him ?
 That thou visitest him every morning,
 And provest him every moment ?
 How long wilt thou not look away from me,
 Nor let me rest, till I draw my breath ?
 Have I sinned ; what did I against thee ?
 Oh thou, that lookest upon men,
 That thou settest me as a mark for thee,
 And makest me a burthen to myself.
 Why wilt thou not forget my transgression,
 And suffer my guilt to go into oblivion ?
 For in a moment I lie down in the dust,
 In the morning thou seekest me, and I am not.

Such is the fate of man—earth to earth ! the first and only oracle of God respecting our destiny. What will a tabernacle of clay, in which a fleeting breath sports itself, in its pride ask more ?

EUTHYPIRON. But you forget, my friend, that this tabernacle of clay is ensouled by the breath of Jehovah. In the inspiration of God is imbreathed the spirit of immortality, and of all living energies. Have you never remarked the representations of similar origin, which ascribe to the breath of God all the powers and miracles of thought, and of a will of Godlike energy, nay, as the word of truth itself declares, the imparting of a divine spirit and of a Godlike faith ? Your grief has led you to contemplate one aspect only of human destiny ; the other is presented in the poetry of the Hebrews with no less force and clearness.

A. With force, do you say ? What is a breath ? You

would not look here for the metaphysical soul of our philosophers ?

E. Most certainly not, nor an analysis of its faculties according to our methods. But the essential, the eternal in its substance, that it came from God and returns to him, that in its perishable tabernacle it puts forth divine energies, and proceeds in a special manner from the word, from the breath of the mouth of God, this is clearly and fully expressed in this language and poetry.

A. Hardly so ! for how late was all this thought of. In a book* belonging to the period of the captivity we are first told, that the breath returns to God, who gave it ; and there it is plainly a sentiment of Chaldee philosophy super-added to the simple traditions of antiquity. In the account of Adam, in Job, in the Psalms, there is nothing of it.

E. Will you not examine more carefully these conceptions of the immortality of man, of his weakness and his strength, especially in regard to the peculiar notion, that his soul is the breath of God. I think you must have overlooked many things, or suffered yourself to be led away by novel opinions ; and surely the matter is too important, and too deeply concerns our humanity, to be lightly disposed of.

The spirit of God bloweth upon me,
The breath of the Almighty giveth me life.
My countenance is as thine before God,
I also am formed out of the clay—
—So long as a breath is in me,
And the spirit of God in my nostrils,
My lips shall not speak wickedness,
Nor my tongue utter calumny.—

Is this feebleness or strength ?

A. The highest degree of force in words.

E. And among the Orientals a word is the utterance of thought, of will, of all the inward energies of the soul. It was early remarked, how great a mystery is involved in the

* Ecclesiastes, xii. 7.

fact, that the soul thinks, the tongue speaks, and the hand executes ; that our soul thinks, and others understand and listen to it merely by means of the breath of the mouth. To God himself nothing could be ascribed, it would seem, more powerful than a word, a breath. It is compared to the flame of fire, to the hammer which breaks the rock in pieces. When all things fail, the breath of God still endures and is still efficient—efficient as wind, reviving as rain that descends and imparts life and fertility.

A. That is the breath of God in nature, the immediate working of his omnipotent will—but the breath of God in man ?

B. He too, man himself is mighty, because he partakes of a divine inspiration ; so that flesh, and spirit, i. e. human weakness, and Godlike energy, are placed in continual contrast.—Recollect an expression, which we find even before the flood, and in the mouth of God himself.

My spirit shall not always
Continue to act in men,
For they are flesh.

Observe too, how their fleshly nature, by a general corruption of manners, shows its character especially in sensuality and imbecility. Nay, go back to the first representation of man, with which God introduces him into the world. He was to be an image of the Elohim, a visible manifestation of their invisible powers, disposing and ruling like them, and in their stead. Let me too, since you have been gratified with an elegy on the weakness of man, repeat to you a Psalm* descriptive of his dominion and power ; a Psalm, which in the prattling of infants establishes for God a strong hold of admiration and praise, at which every enemy falls prostrate ; a Psalm, which crowns man with the dignity and majesty of the angels, as a God of this lower world, as a triumphant ruler over all the works of Jehovah, which lie prostrate at his

* Ps. viii.

feet. It is worthy, and might seem intended, to be uttered forth beneath the open and wide expanse of the starry heaven, which is even now outspreading itself over our heads.

Jehovah, our God, how excellent is thy name
In all the earth!

Thy praise is sounded above the heavens.

From the mouth of babes and sucklings
Hast thou prepared a strong hold of praise
Against thy foe, at which he is prostrate.

If then I look at thy heavens,
At these, the work of thy fingers,
The moon, and the stars, which thou hast ordained

What is man, that thou art mindful of him,
The son of man, that thou visitest him,
In rank, thou hast placed him nearest the Elohim,
Thou hast crowned him with honour and majesty,
Hast made him lord of all thy works,
Hast placed all things under his feet.

His are the herds of sheep and oxen,
The beasts of the field are his also,
The fowls of heaven, and the fish of the sea,
And whatever passeth the paths of the seas.
Oh Lord, our God, how excellent is thy name
In all the earth!—

Carry back now this Pindarick song of praise into the history of the creation, from which it was taken, and with what majesty does man appear!—When all else is created, God pauses, as it were, takes counsel with himself, and seems to bring forth the form of man, as from his own heart. The yet uncrowned creation stands still, and waits for its visible God, and creator. If we were to form a representation of man in the style of genuine epick dignity, and elevation, from what more lofty and comprehensive idea could it proceed?

A. Hebrew poetry however has not furnished such a representation.

E. To furnish such in the worldly sense of poetical representation, was not its purpose ; since man has provided himself with this, in manifestations of both good and evil. What have not men done upon the earth, in works of art, and in the exercise of power ? What have they not attained ? To what have they not aspired ? What a splendid and lofty theme is presented to the poet, who would merely celebrate this historically, in its leading and most important *facts* ! and that whether he sung the triumphs of the spirit of man in the inventions of science and art, or the operations of his hand, the deeds of his almost omnipotent will.—But, as was remarked before, it was not the aim of this poetry to carry out the ideal of man in a physical, but in a spiritual sense. How sublime and beautiful are the conceptions, which it has drawn from the image of God in the human form, and exhibited through the Old and New Testament ! Son of God was predicated of Adam ; friend of God, of Enoch, of Abraham, and the most favoured of the patriarchs. A second Adam appeared, to exhibit, and to verify to his brethren the true form and character of a son of Jehovah, to build up the human race to this idea in all worth and perfection of being. It seems to me, there is no purer and more sublime conception of the ultimate end and aim of the being of man in either the poetry or prose of all other nations.

A. If only it be not too pure, and too lofty for our comprehension ! What know we of God ? and how can men imitate God, unless he humbles himself below the proper powers of his being ? The view, which we take of our destination, and of our duty, must be human, not divine.

E. The moral views exhibited here unite both ; for you just now observed, that the weakness and abasement of man, was pictured in it with no less truth. In relation to our bodies we cannot be the sons of God according to the pure conceptions of the East, for God has no outward figure, and we are formed of the earth. But his finger has fashioned us ;

and the lips of Jehovah have moved, as it were, over the mouth and countenance of man with a breathing of kindness and love. There they still move and breathe upon us ; for in the animated countenance the Spirit of God is visible. In poetry, which does not overlook the weakness of man, in order vainly to ascribe to him the self-sufficiency and independence of a divine being, but which at the same time is not seduced by his weakness to deny his real dignity and high destination ; in this appears a child of God formed for eternity, but yet a feeble and a mortal child.

A. Yes, truly a child ! for the poetry and morals of this people are extremely child-like. All their conceptions are referred back to God, and every thing is derived from the will of God, so as at length must enfeeble the will of man, as well as his powers of research. It becomes a blind or fanatic devotion, in short, Islamism.

E.

Can the papyrus grow up without sap ?
 The water lily increase without moisture ?
 It is yet green, and has not been cut down,
 But while all else flourishes, it withers away.
 So is the course of all, that forget God,
 The hope of the ungodly shall perish.
 That is cut off in which he trusted,
 His confidence is the spider's web.
 She leans upon her house, it will not stand,
 She holds fast to it, but it cannot endure.
 So he stands green and fresh, at early dawn,
 And sends forth his branches in the garden,
 He entwines the rock with his roots,
 They encompass the whole wall.
 At once he is away from his place,
 Which says to him " I never saw thee."

A. You have given me a prolonged image, but no answer.

E. The picture itself is an answer. Poetry without God

is a showy papyrus without moisture ; every system of morals without him, is a mere parasitical plant. It makes a flowery display in fine words, and sends forth its branches here and there; nay, it insinuates itself into every weak spot and crevice of the human soul ; but the sun rises, and it vanishes. The man that invented it himself denies it, and its place and condition are no where known. Yet I would not by this, detract any thing from the worth of psychological investigations, or even descriptions ; but the first, the most ancient and child-like poetry and morals, could not be psychology, otherwise it would forever remain a labyrinth of dark sayings. What was admitted with regard to the poetry of nature, holds still more in regard to the ethical poetry of the most ancient times ; the idea of God must give it intelligibility and simplicity, feeling and dignity. The child is directed by the word of his father, the son is formed by the modes of thinking, and character of the author of his existence. The fear of God, which admits not a spirit of argumentation, was here also the beginning of human wisdom.

A. For the beginning it was well, and helped him on his way. But why must it always accompany him ? It holds him perpetually in leading strings, and the child never learns to go alone. Must not this be the case in the East ? From the childish habits and feelings transmitted from the primeval world, come the burdensome and slavish Mosaick ceremonial, and instead of the human spirit's elevating itself, it sank still lower. Why was this, but because it always looked to God with a slavish fear, and never learned to know its own powers ?

E. What occasioned the Mosaick ceremonial, we shall learn in its proper time, and will transfer no later notions to a period, when milk and honey yet flowed for the child-like capacity of man in morals also. For the child it is well, when it follows implicitly the instruction of the father. In the ethical poetry of the Orientals the idea of God is the

• sun in the firmament, which illuminates the whole horizon of human existence, and even at a late period marked, with its clear and distinct radiance, the dial plate of particular relations and duties. To us of the present day, this sun seems too burning and oppressive ; then its light was indispensable ; for this simple, child-like morality, enforced by reverence for the Divine Being, and wholly derived from him, was to guide the nations of the earth in the way, and must therefore be imparted to them with a character thus child-like, simple, rigid, and elevated. Both in this, and the future world, God was here represented as the guide and father of men.

A. In the future world too ? There we come upon the subject of which we at first intended to speak. At how late a period then, let me remark, and how gradually, from what trifling considerations, and these mostly inferences, which infer too much, and proofs, which prove too much, nay, from blind wishes, and obscure presentiments, has man's hope of immortality been produced ! Adam was earth, and knew of no immortality. He saw Abel lying in blood ; the first death was bewailed, although there was no dead to bewail,—yet no angel came to comfort the mourners with the least hope of immortality. His soul was in the blood, and was poured out upon the earth ; thence it cried towards heaven, and was buried with the blood. Such was the faith of the first world, and even after the flood.* The fathers fell asleep, and their life was ended. Their age is named, and nothing more ; or they are gathered to their fathers, that is, to the grave. This was in time shaped into a realm of shades. But read, throughout the Old Testament, the dark, indistinct, and disconsolate, poetical representations of this realm of shadows—or permit me to offer only one of them to the remembrance of my deceased friend. If it were possible for him to be about us, he would surely now be hovering here ; but even this truth-telling elegy declares, that it is impossible, that there is no return from the dominions of the dead.

* Gen. ix. 4----6.

Man, born of woman,
 Is of few days,
 And full of trouble.
 He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down,
 He fleeth also as a shadow,
 And continueth not.

Upon such dost thou open thine eye,
 And bring me into judgment with thee?
 Among the impure is there one pure?
 Not one.

Are his days so determined?
 Hast thou numbered his months,
 And set fast his bound for him,
 Which he can never pass?
 Turn then from him, that he may rest,
 And enjoy, as an hireling, his day.

The tree hath hope, if it be cut down:
 It becometh green again
 And new shoots are put forth.
 If even the root is old in the earth,
 And its stock die in the ground,
 From vapour of water it will bud,
 And bring forth boughs, as a young plant.

But man dieth, and his power is gone:
 He is taken away, and where is he?

Till the waters waste from the sea,
 Till the river faileth and is dry land,
 Man lieth low, and riseth not again.
 Till the heavens are old, he shall not awake,
 Nor be aroused from his sleep.

Oh! that thou wouldst conceal me
 In the realm of departed souls,*
 Hide me in secret, till thy wrath be past,
 Appoint me then a new term,
 And remember me again.
 But alas! if a man die,

* To make the sense here intelligible to the English reader, I have amplified the expression, but without adding to the meaning of the German. Whether the original Hebrew means any thing more than the grave, as given in our common version, seems at least very questionable. Ta.

He shall never revive.

So long, then, as my toil endureth,
Will I wait, till a change come to me.
Thou wilt call me, and I shall answer,
Thou wilt pity the work of thy hands.
Though now thou numberest my steps,
Thou shalt then not watch for my sin.
My transgression will be sealed in a bug,
Thou wilt bind up and remove my iniquity.

Yet alas! the mountain falleth and is swallowed up,
The rock is removed out of its place,
The waters hollow out the stones,
The floods overflow the dust of the earth,
And thus thou destroyest the hope of man.

Thou contendest with him, till he faileth,
Changest his countenance, and sendest him away.
Though his sons become great and happy,
Yet he knoweth it not—
If they come to shame and dishonour,
He perceiveth it not.—

Could the sentiment be more forcibly expressed, that there is no return from the realms of death, that there no knowledge of the happiness or misery of our friends ever reaches us, and that nothing dwells there, but gloomy obscurity, silence, and everlasting oblivion?

E. You are right. But of what return do you suppose the language here is to be understood? Obviously of a return to this life again, to taste the good things of the earth, which Job was so little able to enjoy. And this it seems to me does not interfere with the strongest convictions of immortality. Whose soul after death has ever returned to enjoy the blessings of the earth? That Job fully believed in the continued existence of something in the kingdom of the dead, we see even here, from the wish, that God would hide him there, till his anger was laid aside, and then restore him to life; although he saw, that this was too presumptuous a hope, and himself abandoned it. But let us examine more nearly

the belief of the Orientals respecting a realm of shades, and trace from early times the circumstances, which gave occasion to it, as well as the original notions of the thing itself.

A. In the first conception undoubtedly it was the grave simply, the abiding and everlasting dwelling place of the dead ; only that they thought of them to be still living in their graves. These therefore they denominated houses, of rest, the dwelling places of endless peace. I have read some poems of the Arabians, in which they are represented, as visiting the graves of their friends like dwelling places, conversing with them, while yet in their graves, and watering the dust of their dwellings, or planting them with herbage. In short this has been in the East an ancient and wide-spread illusion, which came down among the Hebrews even to a late period, and gave occasion to numerous traditions of dialogues, of visions, of sufferings, and of journeyings in the grave. As the soul was conceived to be a mere shadow, a living breath, so its place was assigned in subterraneous regions, in a place of rest, and of perfect equality. This it is, which the complaint of Job represents so feelingly, that there kings and slaves, servants and their taskmasters, are all free, all equal and all alike, at rest but powerless, as a shadow without distinction of members, as a nerveless breath. Thus the whole you perceive was a mere illusion. The dead were held so dear, that one could not and must not think of them as dead, even in the grave, and thus they were represented there, as still having an animate though shadowy existence. Their living power and energy were destroyed, and they only wandered and flitted in the realms of the dead, in the dark nether-world, as limbless and powerless beings. There flow with a noiseless current the rivers of sadness and sorrow, there dwells the king of unsubstantial shadows : there earth-subduing conquerors still delight in their tragick scenes, and cannot free themselves from the dreams of earth ; but they are empty shadowy scenes. So David often prays, that God

would still give him here his songs of joy and triumph, for in the realms of death all is voiceless and still ; there no songs of thanksgiving for triumph over conquered enemies are ever sung. So too the philosophical author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, whom you have adduced as testifying to the doctrine of immortality, says briefly, but well,

What thine hand findeth to do,
Do quickly, while thou hast power,
For there is no work nor device,
There is no knowledge nor prudence,
In the shadowy realm, whither thou goest.

Call to mind now your favourite Ossian, and his Celts. The fathers of his heroes, whose shadow-realm was in the clouds, grasp at the sword, but it is only air or vapour, a cloud with reddening hues, their arm itself too is a shadow, a breath, that flits with the air. Like them, and like the Hebrews, all ancient nations have had a kingdom of their fathers, a realm of departed souls, where each followed still the employment, to which he had been accustomed on earth. Some have represented them as assembling in green fields, others in the clouds ; the Orientals, who adhered to the primitive conception of the grave, placed them under the earth. The whole is only a cherished illusion, not a clear and well assured conception of the immortality of the soul. It is only a shadow, like the subject-matter, which it represents.

E. Every shadow presupposes a substance, a real being. An illusion itself is a shadow of truth. Would the illusion of immortality have been, or have become, as you acknowledge it has, so universal, if it had not had a universal ground in the hearts or in the traditions of the human race ?

A. In the hearts of men was a wish, a friendship, a hope, which produced the pleasing, or the painful dream, and even shaped it perhaps into a universal tradition. Must a man utterly perish as the brutes ? Would not one gladly wish

to live with the sleeping objects of his affection, his fathers, or his children buried in a premature grave? Among the Orientals without doubt the flood gave the first great occasion for the poetical representation of an empire of the dead.—Consider what an impression upon the subsequent traditions must be produced by this monstrous event, the engulfing of the whole living world.

In those days lived the world-subduers,
The offspring of the sons of God, and the daughters of men.
They were men of power and violence,
The renowned heroes of the ancient world.*

Thus it was the Rephaim, the giants, who groan and wail beneath the waves, whose voice perchance was thought to be heard in the roaring billows, and whose restless motion was felt in the earthquake and the storm at sea. But these were the most ancient and gigantick inhabitants of the empire of death. In process of time these traditions were softened down, and it was the silent congregation of the dead, which Job and the Hebrews described. Still the ghosts of heroes continued always to wander in the nether-world. Ghostly kings were seated upon shadowy thrones; nay, kingdoms and states were there, and armies of the slain. (For among the Orientals not persons only, but things, the instruments of power and pride, had each its spirit, and consequently its ghost). Thus this subterranean realm came to have in time its king also, Belial, the king of powerless and unsubstantial shades; and Scheol became his palace, a royal residence of invincible strength, with brazen gates and bolts. What once became

* Gen. vi. 4. The name *Scheol* itself is derived from that, which sinks under or is buried, as from the depths of the earth, or the bottom of the sea. In many representations *Scheol* occurs as the ground of a sunken world, and the Rephaim, the shadow-forms, the ghosts, have always in Job and the prophets something of the gigantick. The passages, in which *Scheol* occurs, have been collected and critically examined by Scheid, (diss. ad cantic. Hiskiaë).

his prey he never suffered to escape, and no captured soul could ever be redeemed from his grasp. Even in the New Testament this mythology has given occasion to many conceptions, as of the king and the conqueror of hell, and of death, who opens the gates, which none could open, who subdues powers, and frees captive souls, which none could subdue and set free. The sense of these images is quite inappropriate, if we apply them to our notions of hell and of death, but within the proper sphere of ancient poetical description they present a sublime picture of a hero, and of a ruler, whose dominion is universal. He in whose power were the souls of men, (he who had the power of death), was an unrightful usurper, and the anointed of God wrested from him his prey. For four thousand years you perceive men were, without assistance, a prey to these terrific, ghostly powers, slaves, who all their lives long must tremble in the bonds, and with the fear of death. To this is to be ascribed such sorrowful lamentations, as those of Hezekiah, and such want of courage in view of death, which other nations met with heroick resolution. The Hebrews were still in this point one of the weakest nations of the earth. The sad and mournful images of their ghostly realm disquieted them, and were too much for their self-possession. They were even more painful, than a belief in utter annihilation.

E. I have permitted you to carry through your discourse, and your historical deduction of the kingdom of the dead has been to me like the melancholy plaint of one in affliction, who finds pleasure in wandering among the shades. You have studied these realms it seems with much attention. But turn your eyes now upward to the stars. That is the book of immortality which God unseals and spreads open to us, and to all people and nations, with every returning night. Think too of the quickening, life-giving influence of the morning, which every day is the symbol of our resurrection, as sleep is an image of death—a symbol that speaks with

clearness, and is every where understood. But do you know of no other hope, that was revealed to men at a period sufficiently early to support them against the terrors of the grave? Who was it, of whom it was said at an early period?

He lived the friend of God,
And while he walked with God,
He was seen no more,
For God had taken him up.

A. You do not consider this saying, the fragment perhaps of an ancient song, as a narrative surely of the translation of Enoch to heaven? It is the soothing echo from the grave of one, who had prematurely died, and had not attained to the years of his father, and his brothers. When children have yet no conceptions of the other world, we say to them, "Your brother is with God! God has taken him away so early, because he loved him, because your brother was so innocent." The first generations of men were still in the same sort of childhood.

E. I willingly admit it, and at all events a premature removal of an object of affection would make the child-like impression, which you describe; just as other nations have said and believed, "This innocent and beautiful youth the Gods have carried off; this delicate and guileless maiden Aurora has stolen away." But permit me to say, that this softening of the language in my opinion is hardly satisfactory for the narrative in question. The pervading tradition even of other nations has connected with it a more pregnant sense, and the poetry of the Hebrews has obviously attributed to it the same, and built upon it. "God took him to himself, God took him to his own dwelling place," became afterwards on many occasions the expressive phrase to denote the fate in the other world of those, who were the favoured of God, and without doubt the notion was derived from this most ancient friend of God. He lived in evil days, and was zealous

for the honour of God ; perhaps was scoffed at and persecuted, as in later times was Elijah, the partaker of the same glorious fate, and the former, as well as the latter, God would also in the end distinguish with the marks of his approbation. Not perhaps in so brilliant a manner as Elijah, yet with the same majestick dignity surely, God conducted his chosen friend into his own eternal dwelling. So Paul understood the expression, so the last book of scripture received and applied it in the image of the two witnesses ascending to heaven in a cloud, and so it is understood by the kindred nations of the East. The Arabians have a multitude of fables respecting the wise, the innocent, the lonely, the zealous, the prophetick, the persecuted and despised Idris, (so they call Enoch) whom God received into heaven, and who dwells in Paradise. Other nations place him upon Albody, the dazzling mountain, on which was held the assembly of the Gods, as tradition also speaks of his intercourse, not with Jehovah, but with the Elohim. This translation of Enoch, instructive as it was, came at once to be also a matter of peculiar interest, and full of hope, as prefiguring a like removal to himself of other friends of God.

A. What others ? I recollect no other example but Elijah.

E. Abraham was a friend of God like Enoch, and you know how distinctively God is called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and for him they all live.* For this world these patriarchs were dead, and without enjoying the promises, which God had given them ; they entered into the dwelling place of their heavenly friend, into a better Canaan ; and the congregation of their fathers became the beautiful family and

* Nothing is proved here from the language of the New Testament. The argument there on the contrary (Matt. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 13—16) derives increased evidence from the fact, that these conceptions were made the ground of representations in the Old Testament.

national phrase of the Hebrews, their kingdom of the dead, or of the blessed. They were like Abraham, like Enoch, in the Paradise of God their friend.

A. I understand the expression of being gathered to their fathers, as meaning nothing more than the depositing of one's dead body, with those of his fathers, in the family tomb.

E. Certainly this external custom, which with good reason is held dear by every people, that has not been broken off from its own stock, and that retains an affection for its ancestry, this I say has undoubtedly had an influence in preserving the faith spoken of, and rendered it visible, as it were, to the sense, but by no means includes the whole of it. Abraham was gathered to his fathers, though he was not buried with them, and Jacob wished to go down to the realm of shades, to his beloved son, although he supposed him to have been torn in pieces by wild beasts. You have even yourself related, how all the nations of the earth, even those we call savage, believe in such an assemblage of their fathers in the realm of departed souls; and it is affecting in a surprising degree with what joy the father goes thither to the embraces of his son, the son to meet with his father, the mother with her child, and friend with friend. I will give you an affecting elegy, as a proof of this, and in books of travels we have a multitude of such witnesses and proofs. Such were those nations, whose departure was among the shades, and who must have formed their notions on the old tradition alone. From this each nation formed for itself its kingdom of the dead, its congregation of the fathers, according to its own notions and modes of life. The Hebrew race adhered to the conceptions of their fathers, and since it was the highest glory of the race, that Abraham, that their father, was the friend of God, could it be, that God who loved him here, and who had accompanied him with support and consolation to the brink of the grave, would now desert him in the grave? that he would leave him to the gloomy

night of a tyrannical and all observing kingdom of the dead ? Even now, was the language of their faith, he shows himself as a friend, and hospitably opens to him his light and glorious dwelling. *He has taken him to himself*—is the beautiful language even of the Psalms.

A. I recollect one ; but to me it is very obscure.

E. We are even now arrived at the house, and will read a couple of them before we separate. One of them* sounds very much like an evening prayer, and some have even considered it as a funeral elegy of the poet himself.

Hear this, all ye nations,
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world !
Ye men of low, and men of high degree,
The rich and the poor, listen together.

My mouth shall speak wisdom,
My heart shall meditate of prudence,
I will give ear to a dark parable,†
I will solve my deep problem on the harp.

Why should I fear in the days of evil,
Though the injustice of foes environ me ?
These have confidence in their strength,
And boast themselves of their great riches.

Can one of them, then redeem his brother,
And deliver him from death ?
Can he even give to God a ransom for him ?
Too costly is the price of the soul,
He bringeth no ransom forever.

That he may always continue to live ?
That he may never behold his grave ?
He must behold it ; for even the wise die,
Just as the fool and the senseless perish,†

* Ps. xlix.

† The poet listens to his song on the harp, as if it came to him from the strings of his instrument. Lyrick poetry, singing and instrumental musick, were then united. The problem, which the poet proposes to solve, is the prosperity of the ungodly, as we see from what immediately follows.

† The fool and the senseless person are here synonymous, as the last verse of the Psalm shows.

And leave their wealth to strangers.

Their grave is now their house forever,

Their tent henceforth from age to age.

If they call countries by their names,

The man in honour* abideth not always,

In death he shall be esteemed as the brute,

He must go hence.

This is their fate ; they also perish ;

And those after them make them their song.†

As sheep they are driven to Hades,

There death shall feed upon them,

And soon the upright shall rule over them.

Their image is with empty shades beneath,

And there is their habitation.‡

But my soul will God redeem from Hades,

He will receive me to his habitation.

Fear not then, when one is made rich,

When the glory of his house is increased.

* The man in honour, is one of those distinguished men, who give their names to countries.

† I leave it undetermined, whether we are to understand here a song of praise, or of reproach and mockery. Of both in the mean time they would be alike ignorant in the realm of shades.

‡ Herder expresses briefly some doubt in regard to the sense of the last words here, and the editor, Prof. Justi, has given a few critical remarks upon the whole verse. Instead of translating it, I have thought it better to give the substance of both his and De Wette's views. The words translated, "death shall feed upon them," they understand, as a continuance of the metaphor in the preceding line. Death is a shepherd, and after driving them to the nether world, "feeds them there." The next line they translate, "the upright shall tread upon them," i. e. upon their graves, or their dead bodies, with triumph. The remainder Prof. J. translates "their rock decays" i. e. the rocky cave, in which they are buried, and "the realm of shades is their dwelling," henceforth their only dwelling. De W. "The nether world mars their form." "By reason of their dwelling place," i. e. the grave. In the preceding parts of the Psalm, where Herder differs from the English translation, De Wette very nearly coincides with it. Ta.

In death he shall carry nothing away,
 And his glory shall not descend with him.
 While he lived, he did well for himself,
 And thou art praised, if skilled for thine own good.
 Soon he goes to the dwelling of his fathers,
 His eternal house, and sees the light no more ;
 Now proud of wealth, and void of sense,
 Then like a brute, and banished hence.

A. I have never apprehended so clear a connexion in the sentiments of the Psalm.

E. Yet it is accordant with the meaning of the words ; and the distinction, which we spoke of, is clearly recognized. The merely sensual souls, who indulge in vain boasting and display, who know nothing but the pleasures of sense, and are without understanding, are driven down like sheep, where (according to a representation sufficiently horrible) death feeds upon and devours them ; while God redeems the souls of the upright from Hades, and receives them into his own habitations. The former waste away a prey to death, and the upright rule over them in the morning, i. e. soon, early, as after a night of sleep, the light of a fairer morning goes forth. The other Psalm, to which I referred, marks this distinction still more clearly. In that, God takes the dead body of his chosen under his protection even in the grave, and from the night of the grave points out a secret path to the dwelling places of his own heavenly light.

A. I understand that Psalm as little as the former one. It must be I suppose the prayer of a priest labouring under disease, whom God supplies with food and drink, and who prays for a speedy restoration to health.

E. It is as clearly a prayer of David, as it is one of his most peculiar and characteristick Psalms. His form of expression, and his personal character may be traced in every verse.

Preserve me O God, for in thee do I trust,

I said to Jehovah, thou art my God,
My happiness hangs all upon thee.*

The sanctuaries of his land,
I hold them dear,†
In them is all my delight.

Let others serve their many idols,
And offer them strange sacrifices.
They are offerings of blood ; such will I not offer.
I will not take their names upon my lips.

Jehovah is my portion, and my cup,
In abundance thou hast cast me my lot,
Pleasant places have fallen to me,
And I have a goodly heritage.

Therefore will I praise Jehovah,
Who hath given me counsel,
By night also my heart goeth after him.

Jehovah is continually before me,
He is my defence, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart rejoiceth,
My soul exulteth within me,

My body also shall rest secure,
For thou wilt not leave my soul
To dwell in the realm of shades,
Nor suffer thy faithful servant
In the grave to see corruption.
Thou wilt show me the way to life,
The fulness of joy in thy presence,
And of pleasures with thee forever.

This Psalm seems to me, both in regard to its contents, and in its relation to the character of David, to be perfectly clear. The expression, "God is on my right hand," i. e. as a friend he acts in conjunction with me and for me, the circumstances enumerated, that God has given him a fair inheritance

* Herder defends this translation by supposing a different reading of the text. De Wette translates "there is no happiness for me without thee," or independent of thee. Tr.

† Here also a conjectural reading is adopted and the conjunction attached as the suffix pronoun to a preceding word. Tr.

not received from his father, (the crown among God's peculiar people); this has fallen to him through the councils of God and his disposition of the lot, (as their lot once fell to the tribes, and God often instructed and sustained him in his afflictions); therefore he cleaves so fast to God, longs after him, esteems so highly the sanctuary of Jehovah, and thinks upon it by day and by night, will have no intercourse with foreign idolatrous kings and their offerings; but esteems Jehovah his portion and his cup, i. e. an inherited golden cup, used on festival occasions, the honour and ornament of the family, a costly inheritance, which he will exchange for nothing else—do not all these appear to you very intelligible, and characteristick of David? * Every trait can be authenticated from his life and from other Psalms.

A. And what further in relation to the future world?

E. God, who was his friend, his father, and his portion here, will not leave him even in the night of the grave: (there his body rests under the special protection of God); his faithful friend and servant—Chasid—he will not give over to the terrors of the realms of death; he will show him a way from the darkness of the grave, to his own dwelling of light, and receive him there with hospitality as a father and friend.—You see clearly in this the conception, which was formed from the translation of Enoch, which the congregation of the Chasidim, the friends of God, Abraham, Moses, &c. more distinctly impressed, which afterwards the translation of Elijah confirmed, and which finally became the Paradise, the dwelling of the fathers, and a perpetual banquet of joy in Abraham's bosom—conceptions, which we still find in the New Testament, and which here were spiritualized, illustra-

* That David is to be regarded in this Psalm, as the type of the Messiah, is seen from the New Testament, but does not belong here. We speak here of the character of the person there speaking, and of the sentiments contained in the Psalm according to their proper connexion.

ed, and beautifully confirmed, as the last poetical book of scripture especially shows.

A. But it is said, the Hebrews adopted the Egyptian mythology of the Islands of the dead.

E. Two poets, who were fond of Egyptian imagery, Moses and Job, have once used an expression denoting a quick passage by ship into the other world; and these are the only traces of it. This mythology never gained a place among the Hebrews, and could not; for they had much better images belonging to the traditions of their own race and nation. They knew nothing of judges in Hades, nor of Charon; and their Belial is any thing else rather than one of these forms. He is, as you observed, a king of powerless shades, and Scheol, hell, is his kingdom, his dwelling place. Their kingdom of the fathers in the presence of God, is surely not derived from Egypt.

A. And the resurrection of the dead?

E. It is a conception pertaining to the kingdom of the Messiah, as this was already confirmed by the figurative descriptions of the prophets; and we shall speak of it hereafter. For the present I must bid you good night! we are both going into the arms of the representative and image of death, and, according to the later analogical representation of the poets, the souls of the good are even in sleep in the Paradise of God.

A P P E N D I X .

1 JOB'S DESCRIPTION

OF THE KINGDOM OF THE DEAD.*

Wherefore did I not perish in the womb?

Why not expire, as soon as I was born?

Why did the knees receive and sustain me?

Why did I learn to hang upon the breast?

Now should I have lain still and been quiet,

* Job, iii. 11. x. 20.

I should have slept and been at rest
 With kings and rulers of the earth,
 Who built desolate places for their graves;
 With princes who had abundance of gold,
 And filled with treasures their houses of death.
 Like an untimely birth I had been buried,
 Like infants which never beheld the light.

There the wicked cease from troubling,
 There the weary are at rest.
 There the prisoners rejoice in their freedom,
 And hear not the voice of the oppressor.
 The small and the great are equal,
 The servant is free from his master.

Are not my days few, and my life as nothing?
 Let me alone, that I may rest a little,
 Before I go hence, and return no more,
 To the land of darkness and the shadow of death,
 The land of dark obscurity and gloomy shadows,
 Where disorder reigns, and even the light is as darkness.

2 SKETCHES FROM AN ARABIAN ELEGY

ON THE DECEASED MOTHER OF A HERO.*

We held our swords and lances ready,
 Yet fate without an onset slew us.
 We held swift horses on the foot,
 And yet they bore us not away
 From swift destruction's touch.
 Whoever lived and loved not this fair world?
 And yet enjoyment here is sought in vain.
 Thy portion in this life and all we love
 Imparts but visions and phantastick dreams.

* This is inserted here to show how poor are the consolations of a people, who are without the hope of immortality. The leading thought in Arabick poems of this kind is, "the grave is our eternal dwelling, the dead are inhabitants of the dust, which waits for us all. The voice, which they utter there, is but the hollow and sepulchral sound of the dead," &c. How much more beautiful ideas on the other hand were gradually unfolded in the poetry of the Hebrews will be shown in the specimen following this.

Divine compassion strews the hanuth,*
 Upon the face, whose beauty is its veil.
 The body waates away beneath the earth,
 While thought to us still paints it fresh and new.
 The robe of honour over thee is spread,
 For thine own son thy power retains.

Now may thy lowly bed of rest†
 Imbibe the droppings of the morning cloud,
 Gentle as thine own hand hath been.

To thine own place hast thou thyself betaken,
 Where not the South, nor yet the Northern breeze,
 The sweet perfume of incense wafts to thee,
 Nor sprinkles o'er thee soft and cooling showers.

A dark abode, where every dweller stays
 A stranger, banished always from his home,
 And all its ties asunder torn.

There dwells the chaste, the self-protected,
 Still pure as water in the clouds of heaven,
 Reserved, but true and faithful in discourse;
 The great physician now has healed her pain.

We still but help each other to our graves,
 And generations following after still,
 But trample on the heads of those before.
 How many an eye that once was gazed upon,
 Is now filled full with stony earth and sand †!
 How many now their eyes have closed forever,
 Whom no misfortune ever blinded.
 Take refuge, Saiphoddaulah, in thy patience,
 And mountains cannot reach thy firmness;
 For much of time and change hast thou endured,
 And through all change hast thou remained the same.

* A fragrant powder, which the Arabians strewed upon the face of the dead. The veil here spoken of is that, with which the body of the dead was covered.

† A common wish uttered by the Arabians at the grave. They believed that even the dead were refreshed by it. They planted their graves also with evergreen trees, and with flowers, which the women on festival days sprinkled with water. See Reiske in Motanabbi, from the translation of which the traits exhibited in this little piece are taken.

† An allusion to a powder for the eyes, a well known ornament among the Orientals.

**THE LAND OF THE FATHERS, ACCORDING
TO THE ISRAELITISH NOTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS.**

He's gone from earth! to what far region going?*

The friend of God—but here no longer known,
The friend of God—our God his love bestowing
Has placed him near his throne.

The vile and Godless crew, to sin consenting,
Go down in death beneath the ocean's waves,
Their ghosts with rage and shame themselves tormenting
In hell's deep hollow caves.†

But after him the Godlike throng pursuing
Shall dwell in Paradise at God's right hand,
Where now, as strangers here the prospect viewing,
They see the promised land.‡

Thy friend, Elijah, there at length appearing,||
Shall soar a conqueror to the lofty sky,
Upborne by fiery steeds, no danger fearing,
To thee, our God, on high.

Nor shall his chosen in their graves deserted,
Be left by him, their friend, to endless night,¶
But in the realm of shades his rights asserted,
Shall raise them to the light.

For thy supporting hand, Jehovah, pleading,
I'll enter death's obscure and gloomy road,‡
Thy hand shall hold me fast, and upward leading,
Shall guide to thine abode.

* Gen. v. 24. Enoch's translation.

† Gen. vi. 17. The deluge is here referred to, as the probable origin of the Hebrew notion of the Rephaim in the kingdom of the dead. Job. xxvi. 5. 6.

‡ Gen. xxv. 8. The congregation of the fathers. See Matt. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 13—16.

|| 2 Kings ii. 11. 12. Ps. lxxviii. 18. Hab. iii. 8. ¶ Ps. xvi. 10. 11.

‡ Ps. xxiii. 4. 6. Ps. lxxiii. 23. 24.

Though from my sight the earth and sky are vanished,
 Though soul and body languish, faint, and die,
 Yet thee shall I behold, nor e'er be banished,
 In fairer worlds on high.*

And hell with all its captive throng restoring,
 Shall he, who once descended, upward bring,
 I hear them cry, in realms of light adoring,
 Oh death ! where is thy sting ?†

* Ps. Lxxiii. 25. 26.

† 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

DIALOGUE VIII.

Of poetry which relates to providence. Whether it represents the events which take place in the world, as resulting from a game of chance, which God is playing with them. Whether its sublime representations of the agency of God, as contrasted with that of man, tends to bring the soul to a state of inaction. Explanation of certain ancient traditions, from which the later representations of providence were derived. Representation of God, as the avenger of secret sins in the history of Cain. Affecting and poetical traits in the narrative. Recitude united with benignity in early apprehensions of God. Transition to certain animated personifications in the poetry of later times. Of blood calling for vengeance, of crying sins, of the bird of retribution, &c. Explanation of the language of God to Cain. Of the judgment of the deluge. By what principles we are to judge of events of this sort. In what style of representation the traditions of this event were conceived. New form and appearance of the earth after the deluge. Of the traditions respecting giants, the sons of God, the journal of events in the Ark, the olive leaf, the rainbow and the incense of the first offering upon the renewed earth. Why the rainbow became the sign of a new covenant. Of the rainbow in the poetry of Northern nations, represented as a giant's bridge. Of the tower of Babel. Of the aim and the style of the whole narrative. What is meant by the expression, a mighty hunter before the Lord. Implied derision and mockery in the whole tradition. General character of poetry relating to Babylon throughout the Scriptures. Isaiah's elegy on the king of Babylon. Of God as the conqueror and punisher of tyrants. Vindication of the brief antitheses, which occur in the poetical descriptions of providence. Impression made by this poetry on the heart. Comparison of Oriental with other forms of poetry in regard to providence. Pictures of providence from Job. Service which this poetry has rendered to humanity. Appendix, containing two Psalms and Job's Pindaric ode in praise of true wisdom.

In a social conversation, at which our two friends were present, many touching proofs of an over-ruling providence were related. Examples were mentioned showing how singularly many were forewarned of misfortune, and even thereby snatched from danger, how richly the children of the

poor and virtuous are often provided for, how unexpectedly deeds of baseness are brought to light, and punished according to the law of rigorous retribution, and how the prayers of the upright and pious are often answered in a remarkable manner, with other things of the like kind. Each of the company had contributed his mite from his own experience, and the company separated with very agreeable impressions. Our Oriental friends remained together, and Alciphron pursued his mode of thinking as follows.

ALCIPHON. Did not the conversation, with which we have been entertained, seem to you, my friend, now and then to partake a little too much of human weakness? If we consider every event, as the result of divine purpose, regard all events as having moral relations, and refer back to God every act, which we ourselves do, with its happy or unhappy results, every thing seems too little, too narrow, and constrained. In our conversations on the subject, you have indeed taken decidedly the opposite side, but have rather calmed my feelings, than convinced my judgment. Even in the poetry of the Orientals, men are disposed of by a game of chance, as the objects, which the invisible mover changes about as he wills, and independently of any choice of theirs. This may indeed, as you recently remarked, give to their poetry a species of dignity and simplicity. Yet I fear it must be only in words, or at best a sort of beclouded and unedifying simplicity. It reduces men to a state of stupidity and weakness, in which at length they give themselves up passively to the will of God, and cease to act freely at all. They only sing, praise God in hymns, and in short keep a perpetual holyday. The poetry, of which we are speaking, which shows in sublime contrasts how God works and controls all things, is like a somniferous sound, that puts an end to our doings, a gentle opiate of the soul. It extols the works of God, but neglects to describe with distinctness and effect the characters and doings of men in their progress to-

wards the happiness and misery, which are the consequence of these. It leaves men undistinguished in the dazzling and overpowering light of God's glory, and blinds them in regard to a knowledge of themselves. Or if man will be a judge of the ways of God according to his own limited rule of moral judgment ; how short-sighted, harsh, partial, and arrogant a judge does he become ! The poetry of the Orientals, taken in connexion with their history, shows this abundantly. The former flies, the latter creeps ; in history all is quiescent, or wicked, in poetry comfort is sought by ascribing it to God—and there the matter is ended. It seems to me, that in this point of view it has rendered but little service, either to the understanding, or the heart of man. It has rather held him back, and veiled him with a cloak of divine magnificence, or by bringing his doings in comparison with the course of divine government, placed him upon stilts, where he must either fall, or learn to go alone with great difficulty.

EUTHYPHRON. I see, my friend, the root of your prejudices is still always in yourself, and unless this is eradicated, it is in vain to discourse of the beauty of any poetry whatever. What would be the use of the sublimest poetry in the world, if it were but an opiate for the soul, or a veil for the eyes, to prevent our knowing the real forms of things, and the true course of events. But how, think you, shall we best pursue the inquiry ? Have not these notions, and this representation of divine providence, resulted from the influence of particular traditions and events ? They have at least remained closely connected with these ancient events, and, in their later application even, reference is always had to these. Shall we not then trace the stream from its fountain ? for I confess to you I would not willingly enter into vague and barren discussions under this azure firmament.

A. Neither would I ; and the histories of Cain, of Abel, of the flood, of the tower of Babel, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the patriarchs, are all alike before us, and from these perhaps all such notions have originated.

E. Let us first consider, then, the history of Abel. It stands there like a mournful flower, marked with blood, and in its simplicity just as poetical as it should be, for a proof of the punitive justice and the providence of God.

Where is Abel thy brother ?*

What deed hast thou done ?

The voice of thy brother's blood

Cries to me from the earth.

And now cursed art thou, an exile in the earth,

Which hath opened her mouth,

The stream of thy brother's blood

To drink from thy hand.

When thou shalt till the ground,

It shall not yield thee its strength,

A fugitive and vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

What do you most admire in this language, the severity of the judge, or the tenderness of the father ? And who shall inflict vengeance here, if God does not inflict it ? The father ? But shall the father avenge the blood of his son upon his first-born ? And must the guilt remain unpunished ? Shall the blood of a brother be shed like the blood of a brute, and men be hardened in savage cruelty and wickedness ? And how if the murderer conceal his crime, and when called in question, rebel against his father himself ? The voiceless earth could not reveal the transgression to the father of the race, but to God it made known the deed ; the blood cried out and called for punishment. Observe how naturally, and how forcibly, every thing is set forth here,—the blood crying for vengeance, (and for a long time the living soul was supposed to be in the blood ;) the ground proclaiming the deed ; the maternal earth, which received the blood of her son from the hand of his brother, drank it, as it were with horror, and afterwards refused to the murderer the free enjoyment of her fruitful energies. Observe, with what strict justice God in-

* Gen. iv. 9.

flicts punishment ; for the curse, which he pronounces, only unfolds the consequences of sin. The murderer could no longer remain in the house of his father, for there he would be the occasion of misery to himself and to all. He could not stay in the region, where the crime was committed ; for the blood raised its voice, the echoing earth cried out, and he himself said, " Every one that finds me, will slay me ; I must be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth." The merciful judge, therefore, did what the perplexed criminal knew not how to do. He removed him from his family, and from the circumstances which awakened his recollection and horror of the deed. He gave him another, perhaps unfruitful and mountainous, but for him secure region, and even became himself surety for the preservation of his life. Thus the blood of his brother was atoned for without a bloody revenge. The living is spared and punished. Do you not then consider this history, as a model of paternal justice ? and is not the whole tradition, in its several traits, fitted to alarm, to warn, to sooth, and to benefit ?

A. And has it produced these effects ?

E. Certainly. Recollect the example of blood crying for vengeance even in the last book of the scriptures. The souls, which are represented as under the altar,* are the blood of the slain, which had been spilled, as Abel here may be conceived, in a figurative sense, to be an offering, as it were, upon the altar. They call for vengeance upon their persecutors, but white robes are given them ; they are withdrawn from their blood, and put off in their expectations to the day of God's vengeance. So through the whole of the Old Testament the blood of prophets and witnesses for the truth calls for revenge, but God has reserved it for himself. He is the judge of all violence and outrage, especially of all secret sins and deeds of shame. That, of which no man makes

* Rev. vi. 9. 10.

complaint, has a voice for him. That, which none on earth can or will punish, he must call to account in right of his authority, as the father and judge of the whole race of man.

Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*

This is the pervading peculiarity of Biblical poetry, and truly a sublime and instructive idea for the human race. By means of this, God awakened the consciences of men, and softened them, at least through the influence of fear and terror. Their hands were to be restrained from deeds of blood, even the blood of revenge, and hence the voice of misdeeds was made to speak thus audibly.

A. But this purpose is not attained. How unmerciful is the avenger of blood in Arabia even to the present day; and among the Hebrews, it became necessary for Moses to soften and moderate the existing custom by special laws.

E. From this nothing more can be inferred, than that the fire of revengeful passions was kindled deep in the hearts of this people, and that what was of a good tendency only softened and moderated their cruel and hard-hearted propensities in a less degree, than it should have done. According to the representations of Arabick poetry, the poison of asps distils from the dead body of the slain, and continues to do so, till he is avenged, that is, sprinkled with fresh blood.† A bird of bloody omen rises from the blood, and follows the murderer. Thus, the office of the avenger of blood is inherited from generation to generation, and the avenger becomes in his turn the prey of the avenger. Every tone and word, that, in regard to this maddening passion, tends to soften the human heart, and direct the thoughts upwards, is a gift from

* Ps. xc. 8.

† A number of Arabick poems containing such sentiments may be seen in the Hamasa, and many proofs of such a belief are found in their history.

heaven, and it is not the fault of the instruction, contained in these traditions and this poetry, but of the revengeful spirit of the Orientals, that it has been applied with no better effect. But there are, in fact, undeniable evidences of moderation, and beautiful examples of it in the Psalms and Prophets. How forcible and concise is the complaint of Job.

Mine eye is dim with weeping,*
 On mine eyelids rest already
 The shadows of death.
 No robbery is in my hands,
 And my prayer is pure.
 O Earth, cover not my blood !
 Let my cry go up continually !
 For lo ! my witness is in heaven,
 My witness dwelleth on high.
 My friends are but mockers ;
 Mine eye looketh with tears to God.

Tender and subdued feelings of this sort are the most beautiful aim of the poet, as they are an honor to humanity.

A. But would it not have been better, if the judge, as a father, had anticipated the crime of Cain, and so every crime, rather than have punished it after it was committed ?

E. He did what was possible in the nature of things, and so he does now and always. He did in fact anticipate.

Jehovah looked not upon the offering of Cain,
 And Cain was wroth, and his countenance fell.
 Then said Jehovah, why art thou wroth ?
 And wherefore is thy countenance fallen ?
 In doing well, shalt thou not be accepted ?
 And if thou doest evil, lo, sin is lurking
 (As a ravenous beast †) at thy door.
 He aims at thee, and thou shalt subdue him.

* Job. xvi. 16—20.

† The verb here is used in the Arabick of the lurking of wild beasts ; and there is no doubt, that sin is here personified as a ravenous beast, a lion, or tiger, that, hungry and blood-thirsty, was lurking at the door of

This was all which could be said to Cain. God spake with him, as with a froward child, and dissuaded him from yielding to that, which was sleeping in his heart, and lurking at his door, like a beast of prey. The crime so near being committed could not have been pictured more truly or more fearfully. And what God did to Cain, he does to every man, if he will but look to his own heart, and listen to the voice of God in his conscience.

A. But how will you vindicate the judge in regard to the deluge? How is it to be justified, that on account of a few leading men and giants he inflicted punishment upon the whole world, suffered every living creature, even the brutes, to perish, "because all flesh had corrupted his way," and delivered eight persons with what could be taken with them into the ark, as alone innocent? Does not this tradition give the most narrow and partial impression, that can be conceived?

E. The judge of the world needs the vindication of none of his creatures! Those destinies, to which the whole earth is subjected, are laws of nature, to which every individual must be subject. It is ill philosophizing over the ruins of a sunken capital of an empire, or of a perished continent. As to the brutes, do they not always follow the destiny of man? and, if we must philosophize, might we not, on the ground of their daily abuse, without much difficulty reason them out of the world? We must not then judge of this event and tradition, and contemplate it as metaphysicians, but in its physical and moral relations, and then see what impression it is fitted to make. All its accounts of the corruption of the human race seem to meet together with a heavy and sad impression.

A. Because they are taken from traditions of a violent Cain. Lette (in *Symbol. liter. Bremens*, P. III. p. 563.) adduces two verses out of the Togrui, which are very apposite here. "My friend is where enemies are lurking as lions lurk round the haunts of the young deer." So too the resisting of temptation, and the overcoming of sin, could not be represented to Cain under a more apposite image.

and gigantick race, and come to us only through those, who escaped the deluge.

E. So much the more original are they. The painful and distressing part of the account, and of the whole record of the ark, is the best pledge of its antiquity. Compare our years and our faculties with the years and the faculties of those Titans, the first-born of the ancient world, who yet felt in themselves the fresh energies of creation, and devoted them to oppression, luxury, licentiousness, and crime alone. How much even now can a base man, possessed of power and distinction, accomplish in his brief span of life—and how much, then, could they effect in their thousand years? perhaps too with much cultivation, and an entire predominance of the power of evil. On these grounds, I can readily credit the ancient tradition.

Jehovah saw the wickedness of men,
That it was great upon the earth.
Their imaginations, the thoughts of their hearts,
Were only evil and continually.
It repented him, that he had made men,

that is, men, who could be so early and so widely sunk and abandoned in wickedness. Here too, therefore, he acts, as a judge, and a father; he gave the earth another ordinance, and subjected it to new laws.

A. To new laws do you say?

E. Obviously. After the flood, the period of human life is visibly diminished, and however one may account for the deluge, it certainly resulted from the natural laws of the earth in the existing stage of its formation. It had been gradually and slowly formed, and raised above the waters. For a long time, and at different periods, the water had stood above the earth, and in the first period of its being inhabited, extensive deluges in all parts of it were not unfrequent. Perhaps too, at that period, only the higher elevations of the earth's surface were at all inhabitable, the remainder being

still under water, or exposed to sudden overflows. A sudden shock, or any essential change, might bring back the water upon the inhabited parts of the earth ; and perhaps this was done by a change in the position of the earth's axis. In short, every thing at that time came into the course, in which it is now proceeding, and the first heroick age must necessarily perhaps be only the temporary condition of the race in the early progress of its development, while shaping (and misshaping) itself in the exercise of its untried powers ; which condition also had been designed with reference to this change in the state of the earth. To the beginning of the development and formation of our race pertained a long period of life, such as scarcely belongs to our condition now. Without doubt there was then a corresponding state of the earth, such as no longer exists. After the flood, God made a new covenant, a new ordinance for the seasons, the customs of life, laws and length of days, and from this point, properly speaking, though still in a dim and obscure dawning of light, our history has its origin. The antediluvian history sounds to us, only as a fabulous account of heroes and giants, coming over the floods of a sunken world.

A. Would that we knew something more of these fables of giants.

E. We ought to wish for no such thing, and even the few traces that we have of them have been wickedly abused. What fictions have not been invented out of what is said of the sons of God, who went in to the daughters of men ? and yet the expression " sons of God," i. e. nobles, heroes, men of superior power, beauty, and strength, is common and current in all heroick songs:—but we are wandering from our purpose.

A. I do not think so. That this sad fate of the earth, if it was only the course of nature, should be considered as a punishment of the giants, and of their intercourse with the daughters of men ; that Noah should learn to regard himself, as the one alone chosen for deliverance, as the favorite of

God, and the only worthy and upright man—needs an explanation.

E. He was so, and therefore ought so to regard himself. As his name implies, God through him procured the earth rest from the tyrants. He had been greatly afflicted, and saw himself, though in a difficult and painful manner, alone delivered from death. How narrow and limited is his confinement in the ark! With what longing does he open the window of the ark, and permit the birds to fly out! With what emotion, and what feeling of returning confidence, is the first discovered olive leaf of the dove regarded! The whole narrative contains not a word of insult, or malicious joy, over the perished world, but rather the saddened emotion of the little band, who had escaped, who looked upon the first lovely rain-bow, as a sign of the returning sun, and of the favor of God, and who stepped forth, with a kind of dreaming joy, upon the muddy surface of their ancient mother earth. “Jehovah smelled the sweet savor of their first offering, and blessed the earth, and resolved that he would not again destroy it.” Can the feelings of men be more strongly expressed, than God himself here feels them as it were for them? He sees the returning bow in the cloud with the joy of a father, and makes it,—the image of his own goodness, the first glance of the joyous eye of the world upon the dark masses of clouds,—to become the sign of his unchangeable covenant. He encompasses the earth with a fresh and inseparable chorus of joyful seasons, and these still attend its course.

A. I have never contemplated the account in this light, and have often wondered, how a fleeting phenomenon in the clouds could become the memorial of a perpetual covenant.

E. Of a covenant so sure, that, as Isaiah* beautifully interprets this account, the mountains and hills shall be re-

* Isa. liv. 7—10.

moved, before this promise of God shall fail. So the traditions of the North, after their fashion, represent the rainbow as a bridge, which shall stand firm even to the end of the world, and can be broken asunder only at the final shaking of the firmament—a stiff and harsh derivation, it must be confessed, from this original and child-like tradition, but yet containing the sense of it. The other wide spread gloss on the subject is indicated here too, that since the world is not again to be destroyed by water, it is to be consumed by fire. In short, my friend, man is a moral being, and should learn to view every thing under its moral aspect. The earth must be punished by the waters of the flood, and those, who were saved, must bring with them into their new world the impression, how fearfully God punished the predominance of crime. The laws prescribed by Noah are therefore strict and determinate. They indicate the height, to which corruption had attained in former times, and sketch, as it were, the first rights of the people, I might say, of brutes and men, on the renewed earth. So soon as in the building of the tower of Babel, an appearance of like proceedings on the part of the great and powerful occurred,—the judgment of heaven is again awake to confound them.

A. Here we come upon a delightful fable! All men are of one speech and one language, and, as if they might always have remained so, as if such marvellous confusion would scarcely have been necessary in the least degree in the natural course of things, they must build a tower, whose top should reach to heaven, and God must find it necessary to keep a watch upon the progress of the building, and use earnest precautions respecting it. He came to the conclusion, it seems, that they would not desist, until he performed, I know not what miracle, upon their lips and language, in order that what had always happened might happen again, that is, that they might be scattered abroad upon the earth. Pardon me, if I find the narrative in itself, and as a specimen

of the judgments of heaven, rather too strongly characterized, by simplicity.

E. If you look at it in this light, it is so. But do you observe in what connexion the tradition occurs?

A. In the midst of genealogical registers.*

E. And immediately after those, which are divided according to languages, countries, and nations. The collector of these traditions had some experience and understanding, as well as we, and knew, that with nations, tribes, and wandering migrations, languages also were distinguished. But on this very account he inserted here this singular tradition, in order to show by what event men were brought under the hard necessity of being dispersed and separated from each other.

A. And this you suppose was the child-like enterprise of building a tower up to heaven?

E. It is here represented as childish, and has a childish result. Because they were of one speech and language, they would build a tower to heaven, and even while they were building they become diverse in speech and language. They would have a visible mark to prevent their being dispersed, and became dispersed. The purpose of the narrative is obvious.

A. But the descent and fearful precaution of God on account of it?

E. It is obviously said in mockery, as in fact, the whole tradition is of this character. Have you never read the Psalm,

Why do the nations rage,
And imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth are assembled,
The rulers take counsel against Jehovah—
He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh,
Jehovah shall hold them in derision.

* Gen. xi.

Here you have the best commentary on the whole narrative. Look at the foregoing chapter. Who ruled in Babel? who was the builder of it?

A. "Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord."

E. And why is he called so? Certainly not for the foolish reason, that he hunted foxes and hares on the plains of Shinar, where there were neither mountains nor forests,—not to mention, that one does not hunt such animals before the Lord, in any peculiar sense. If it were intended to say this, it would indeed be the most weak and simple of all sayings. But what is meant by a hunter in Hebrew?

A. A lurking enemy.

E. "A mighty hunter," therefore means a crafty, lurking enemy, of great power, one who ensnares men, and oppresses them with cunning and force. Such was Nimrod, according to the universal tradition of the East, in which he is often mentioned, and the same thing is contained in the narrative, which you are so much disposed to ridicule. He found a delightful plain, materials, and willing laborers, for building himself a residence and a royal tower. To the subdued and easily deceived savages, that he had drawn together, he pretended, that it was a token of their security and of their lasting union, but in his own purpose it was a monument of his pride and of their slavery. Now you are aware, that the most ancient times represented the skies as the dwelling place of God, and therefore, whatever approached them obtruded itself upon the region peculiarly belonging to him, and, as it were, encroached upon his throne. In just this sense the narrative says,

Go to, let us build a city and tower,
Whose top may reach to heaven.

And God, condescending to imitate their resolve, says in turn.

Go to, let us go down now,
And there confound their language.

They have begun their work,
And nothing will be restrained,
Till the work is accomplished.

Do you not perceive a continued strain of sarcasm very obvious here ?

A. I am surprised, that I never remarked it before.

E. And the greatest reproach of all lies in the result of their mighty enterprise. They resolved to scale the heavens. God stood in fear for the safety of his throne, was assured that they would not desist from their gigantic enterprise, and to prevent their success—only laid his finger upon their lips, changed the articulation of the breath, and there are the ruins of their enterprise. It is called confusion, Babel, an everlasting monument of their pride, brought low by a mere nothing. The narrative accords with the spirit of the thing. It is the finest example of satire expressed, with unaffected simplicity, by the event itself, where the great and the little, the purposed ascent of men, the descent of God, the confidence and arrogance of the former, the insecurity and dread of the latter, together with the singular means, by which he knows how to free himself from danger, are placed silently side by side. The confusion of that little particle of air, which is articulated in the mouth, does more than a tempest of lightning and thunder ; the usurper of the throne of God stands confounded and put to shame. He and his royal tower are—a proverb of reproach. “This was the mighty hunter before the Lord,” who ventured to compare himself with him, and resolved to raise himself conspicuously before his eyes, and mount upward towards the heavens upon the shoulders of betrayed and oppressed hordes of the human race. That my explanation is the true one is witnessed by all the writings of the Hebrew poets respecting Babylon. They all have precisely the tone and character of this first tradition.

A. The same tone and character ?

E. All are satires upon Babylon, in accordance with the general spirit and expression of this tradition. As it is here, so every where, Babylon is another name for pride, magnificence, arrogance, oppression of the people and of nations, crafty policy and tyrannical domination. It is continually, as it is here, the symbol of daring impiety against God, of arrogant and ambitious enterprises, aspiring to the heavens, and a throne among the stars ; but, at the same time, of confusion and desolation, and of the derision with which God looks upon the giant projects of men. The haughty queen has always, as here, the cup of trembling in her hand, from which she first causes the nations to drink, and must at last drink herself. Her glory is then brought down to the dust, and its scattered ruins are called—Babel.

A. You will enable me, I perceive, to look at all the prophets more understandingly, for the poetry which they contain respecting Babylon is in this character.

E. The poetry of the Bible respecting other nations is equally distinct and characteristick, as we shall see at another time. Even in the last book of Scripture, Babylon is exhibited in the same form and character, as that in which I have represented it. She has in her hand the cup of abominations, with which she intoxicates the nations ; on her forehead is a name indicative of licentiousness and impiety ; she finally sinks like a millstone cast into the ocean, and over her ruins is heard a song of derision and lamentation, in the same spirit, which this tradition breathes. The controlling mistress of the world, the mighty huntress of men, who arrogated to herself the attributes of Jehovah, is forever put to shame.

A. I recollect a beautiful elegy of Isaiah, with which I made myself familiar on account of its reference to the realms of the dead.* It exhibits the same silent derision, the same

* Isa. xiv.

sepulchral tones of lamentation, which you have mentioned. It moves in lengthened elegiack measure, like a song of lamentation for the dead, and is full of lofty scorn and contumely from the beginning to the end.

E. Will you read it ?

A.

In the day, when Jehovah shall give thee rest
From thy distress, and anxiety, and thy slavish bondage,
Then shalt thou take up a song over the king of Babylon,
And shalt say,

How hath the taskmaster become still !
The exactor of gold ceased to oppress !
Jehovah hath broken the oppressor's rod,
The sceptre of the tyrants,
That which smote the nations in anger,
With strokes, which were never remitted,
Which ruled them with stern severity,
And oppression that nothing restrained.

Now the whole world is quiet and at rest,
The nations send forth a song of joy,
Even the fir trees exult over thee,
The cedars of Lebanon,
" Since thou wast laid low, no one comes up
To hew us down and destroy us."

The ghostly realm beneath was roused for thee,
It moved to meet thee at thy coming.
It stirred up for thee the ghostly shades,
Even all the mighty ones of the earth.
It raised them up from their thrones,
All the kings of the nations.
They all welcomed thee, and said,
" Art thou also become a shadow like us ?
Art thou, too, made even as we ?"

Brought down even to the dead is thy pride,
And low the triumphal sound of thy harps.
Thy couch beneath thee is the worm,
The mould of death thy covering.

How art thou fallen from heaven !
Bright star ! thou son of the dawn !
How art thou crushed to the earth,

That didst conquer the nations !

Thou saidst in thine heart, " I will mount to heaven !
Above the stars of God will I exalt my throne !
I shall sit aloft where the Gods assemble,
Upon the mountain heights of the North !

" I will mount up above the heights of the clouds,
I shall become like the Most High !"
But down to the abyss art thou hurled,
To the hollow caves of the dead.

And those, that see thee, gaze upon thee,
They narrowly scan thee, " Is this the man,
Who made the earth to tremble ?
And shattered kingdoms in pieces ?"

" The world around he made like a desert,
He rendered its cities desolate,
He opened not the prison door of his captives.

The kings of the nations all sleep in glory,
Each in his own house, his spacious tomb.
But thou art cast forth from thy grave,
Like a monstrous and abhorred birth.*

Covered with slain, whom the sword hath pierced,
Who sink down among the stones of the pit,
Thou liest there like a carcase trodden under foot.
Thou shalt not be united with them in burial,
For thou hast made thine own land desolate,
Thine own people hast thou smitten.

The seed of evil-doers shall not be named,
Nor called to remembrance forever.
Give their sons to death for the sake of their fathers,
That they rise not again and inherit the land,
And fill the country with cities."

I will rise up against thee,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
I will destroy the name and race of Babel,
The child and grand-child, saith Jehovah.
I will make it a hold for the porcupine,
A morass of stagnant water ;
I will sweep it into the rubbish of desolation,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

* It is customary with Isaiah to compare a family to a tree, and a member of it to a branch. An abhorred and cast off branch, therefore, is without doubt a monstrous and deformed birth.

E. Here you see the haughty oppressor of the nations, her, who arrogantly aspired to heaven, and to build her throne above the stars ; and immediately after the object of God's derision, humbled to the dust, and thrust down to the abyss ; she lies amidst the cast off rubbish of desolation. "The desolate daughter of Babylon" is the name and representation of all biblical poetry respecting Babylon, and many traits in the elegy, which you have read, would seem as if intended for Nimrod and the first building of the tower. But our thoughts are becoming as much dispersed, as the people of whom we are speaking. The leading trait, which we were to remark upon at present, was this, that the poetry of the East tends to make us observe more particularly, how the providence of the heavenly judge dashes the pride of tyrants, and thrusts down to hell that which would exalt itself to heaven.

A. And exalts too that which is low ; here we have therefore an example of those sublime contrasts in the agency of providence, of which we spoke at first. They seem to me quite too monotonous and full of repetition.

E. Just as the parallelism in its general character seemed to you, when you first considered it. These contrasts are one kind of parallelism ; the loftiest and most powerful *marshal*, or poetical exhibition, which such general representations of worldly scenes can admit. Do they not also exhibit the nature of things, and give us a view of the occurrences and changes of the world, as they are in themselves ? What do we see in the world, and the things of the world universally, but continual ebb and flow, exaltation and abasement ? Nothing continues, nothing can continue at the same point of elevation. All here below is fluctuating like the waves, and in the sight of God what is this drop of a world, with all its giants and heaven-daring conquerors, but a swelling and bursting bubble. Hesiod and Homer, Æschylus and Pindar, could paint the fleeting billows of worldly

change, as contrasted with the unchanging and unchangeable God of fate, under no form more true or expressive. They picture the contrast of the high and the low, the strong and the weak, as if they had derived it from the East. Now I willingly believe, that such changes of destiny under the despotick governments of the East may be more frequent, more sudden, and more striking. But as to their essential grounds, they are every where the same, the burden and end of the song, the result of human history. To him, who, in reading these contrasts, finds no examples to illustrate them, they stand as unmeaning and empty sounds; but to one, whose memory is stored with facts and the treasures of experience, they are a poetical abridgment of all history, and on this account I place a high estimate upon Job, the Prophets, and Psalms.

A. And our church hymns of course no less, since in these too such contrasts, in regard to the course of providence, are imitated from the Psalms.

E. Certainly. They sound here, to be sure, comparatively unanimated, dull, and unnatural; yet many hymns and Psalms respecting providence are among the finest in our collections. Some are beautifully versified, the sentiment universally intelligible, I might say common place. These hymns too have sufficiently proved their power and influence on the human heart. They are the consolation of the unfortunate, and the support and strength of the poor. They come to him, as a voice from heaven, to console him in his desolation, and they calm and quiet his soul. Job and the Psalms are a store-house of observations and moral reflections on human life, on good and ill fortune, on pride and humility, true and false self-confidence, and confidence in God. And since, throughout the whole, the eye of God is represented as watching over the course of human events, we may say with truth, that this poetry has exhibited the same unity and simplicity in the succession of events in the world, which, as

we before observed, it exhibited in the scenes of nature. The exhibition of art in the poetry of the Greeks is but tawdry ornament compared with this child-like and pure simplicity ; and in reading the Celtick poetry, fond as I am of [it, I always feel as if wandering beneath a clouded evening sky. It presents indeed beautiful scenes in the clouds and on the earth, but without a sun, without God, and without a purpose which is determinate, and capable of giving unity to the whole. Man at last vanishes like a cloudy vapour, while in the East he stands upon a rock, with the everlasting God for his sure foundation.

I will betake myself to God,
To God will I lift up my voice,
Who doeth great things and unsearchable,
Marvellous things without number.

He giveth rain upon the wide earth,
And sendeth streams upon the dry fields,
That he may exalt those that are low,
And raise to happiness those that mourn.

He maketh vain the devices of the crafty,
And their hands perform not their enterprise.
He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,
And precipitateth the counsels of the intriguer,
So that they meet with darkness in the day-time,
And grope at noon-day, as in the night.

Thus he saves the poor from their sword,
And the weak from the hand of the strong,
So that hope is given to the poor,
And iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Happy is the man whom God correcteth,
And the chastening of the Most High despise not,
For he maketh sore, and bindeth up,
He woundeth, and his own hand healeth.

In six troubles will he deliver thee,
And in seven shall no evil touch thee.
In famine he shall save thee from death ;
In war, from the hand of the sword.

From the scourge of the tongue* shalt thou be hid,
 Nor be afraid, when the destroyer cometh.
 At the destroyer and at hunger thou shalt laugh,
 Nor fear the wild beasts of the earth.

The stones of the field are thy sure allies,
 And the wild beasts are at peace with thee.
 Thou knowest that thy tent is secure,
 Thou returnest, and findest it in safety.

Thou knowest that thy seed shall be many,
 Thine offspring as the grass of the earth.
 Thou shalt come to thy grave in full age,
 As a shock of corn cometh in, in its season.

Let us be thus favoured by the care of providence, and it would be our own fault, if we should on that account become careless and inactive. I leave every one to his own taste, but to me it is obvious, that these simple and unstudied contrasts, (child-like and artless reflections on the course of events from the mouth of aged and experienced men), had a peculiar tendency to nourish the tender plant of a kind of poetry, that breathes confidence in God and in his special and providential regard for the human race. The Orientals, beyond a doubt, produced them; and the most ancient poetry of the Greeks is, in this respect, entirely Oriental in its character. But it was only in this simple form, that they could be apprehended moreover by the most simple and undisciplined understanding, and seize upon the heart of man, when most depressed and most in need of their influence. They are a kind of mirror of the world, and sum up the experience of the long and instructive life of the patriarchs. As mountains grow old, so empires fall into decay; as the fresh leaf puts forth, so new fortunes and new hopes spring up for man—thus the seasons of the year and the periods of human

* The scourge of the tongue is, according to the parallelism, the bite of a blood-thirsty brute. The destroyer is the lion, which in the following verse is connected with hunger, i. e. a hungry, ravenous destroyer. The last verse clearly explains the three preceding.

life, the scenes of nature and the varying aspects of human destiny, are connected together, and God is the controller of them all. Even at the present day we may hear experienced and moralizing old men, when the fermenting elements of life have worked themselves clear, discoursing in the same tones with Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets, and the incredulous and headstrong youth finds by experience at last, that they have discoursed truly. For the most part, too, the reflections in praise of providence are suggested by the pictures and historical traditions, which we have treated of, or shall treat of,—the flood and the memorials of Divine punishment, the confounding of human purposes and exposure of hidden crimes. From these they proceed, as their source, and terminate throughout in the silent fear of God and wisdom of man—forming without doubt the richest treasure, the most useful poetry and instruction, as the guide of our shadowy and fleeting life. I could wish I were acquainted with a poem, that combined together in its representations the most striking and affecting scenes of providence in our own history. The more simple, the more Oriental would it become in its general characteristic.

• A P P E N D I X .

1. A SONG OF PRAISE, ON THE HELP OF GOD.*

God is our refuge and strength,
 A sure defence in time of need,
 Therefore we fear not, though the world be shaken,
 And the mountains sink in the depths of the sea.
 Let its floods roar and be tumultuous !
 Let the mountains tremble at his majesty ;
 Yet will his refreshing streams
 Make glad the city of God ;
 The dwelling place of the Most High.
 God is in the midst of her ! she is still unmoved !

* Ps. xlv.

God helpeth her, looking down upon her
In the time of her need.

The nations rage, and empires sink,
He thundereth, and the earth is melted.

Jehovah, the God of hosts is with us !

The God of Jacob is our refuge !

Come, behold the works of Jehovah !

Who now maketh the countries deserts,

And now, even to the end of the world,

Maketh wars to cease.

Breaketh the bow and cutteth asunder the spear,

And burneth the chariot in the fire.

" Be still and know, that I am God !

The king of nations, the ruler of the world !"

Jehovah, the God of hosts, is with us !

The God of Jacob is our refuge.

2. A SONG OF PRAISE ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.*

Praise ye the Lord !

Praise Jehovah, O my soul !

While I live, I will praise Jehovah,

I will praise my God, while I have being !

Put no confidence in men of might,

In a son of man, who hath no strength.

His breath vanisheth, he returneth to the earth,

And all his purposes are cut off.

Happy is he, whose help is the God of Jacob !

Who trusteth in Jehovah, his guardian God,

That created the heavens, and the earth,

The sea, and all that is therein,

And keepeth truth forever.

He procureth justice for the oppressed,

He provideth bread for the hungry.

Jehovah giveth eyes to the blind,

Jehovah raiseth up the bowed down,

Jehovah loveth the righteous,

Jehovah preserveth the strangers,

He supplieth the fatherless and widows,

And subverteth the counsels of the oppressor.

Jehovah will reign forever !
 Thy God O Zion from generation to generation !
 Praise ye the Lord !

3. JOB'S ODE IN PRAISE OF WISDOM.

Man hath found an outlet for the silver,
 The place of the gold, which he fineth.
 He hath taken iron out of the dust,
 And molten brass out of the stone.

He hath set bounds to darkness,
 And every extreme hath he searched out,
 The stone of dark obscurity,
 And of the shadow of death.*

A flood goeth out from the realm of oblivion,†
 They draw it up from the foot of the mountain,
 They remove it away from men.

From the earth upward, goeth forth bread,
 And underneath it is changed as by fire.
 There in its rocks is found the sapphire,
 Interspersed with dust of gold.

The way no mountain bird hath seen,
 The vulture's eye hath not discovered it ;
 No stately beast hath trodden it,
 No lion hath ever passed through it.

Man placeth his hand upon the rock,
 He overturneth the mountain by the roots.
 He cutteth out rivers from among the rocks,

* Probably the last stone in the mining investigations of Job ; the corner and boundary stone, as it were, of the kingdom of darkness and ancient night. H.

The language here used must designate metalliferous stones, veiled in the deepest night, and deposited in the darkest depths of the earth, but which yet the unwearied miner searches out. J.

† According to this division and mode of reading, the dwelling of the forgotten would be the kingdom of the dead, and at a greater depth than the deepest mines have reached. Streams break forth from the river of eternal oblivion beneath, and yet are overcome by the miners, pumped dry, and turned out of the way. Yet I confess the passage remains obscure to my own mind.

And whatever is costly his eye seeth.
 He searcheth the floods in their deep fountain,
 And that which is hid he bringeth to light.

But where shall man find wisdom ?
 And where is the place of understanding ?
 Man knoweth not the seat thereof,
 It is not found in the land of the living.
 The abyss crieth, it is not in me !
 The sea respondeth, not in me !

It cannot be purchased for gold,
 Nor silver weighed as the price thereof.
 Gold from Ophir cannot equal its worth,
 Neither the precious onyx and sapphire.

It is never ranked with gold and chrystal,
 No precious jewel is ever exchanged for it.
 Ramoth and Gabish are not to be named,
 For the possession of wisdom is better than pearls.
 The topaz of Ethiopia is not compared with it,
 The most fine gold cannot equal it.*

Where then shall man find wisdom ?
 And where is the place of understanding ?
 It is hidden from the eyes of the living,
 Kept secret from the fowls of heaven.
 Nothingness and death answer,
 We have heard the rumour thereof from afar.

God marketh out the road to it,
 He alone knoweth its abiding place.

* All this variety of wealth indicates the Idumæan origin of the book of Job. The Idumæans at an early period had the trade by way of Ezi-on Geber and Elath on the Red Sea, which the Israelites first gained under Solomon. Hence their acquaintance with Ophir, Æthopia, and the costly articles here named. From the passages relating to mining, which occur in this book, doubts have been started in regard to its antiquity, but wholly without reason. So soon as gold and precious stones were dug from the mountains, mining existed, and there are proofs enough, that it existed very early. The passage of Job, in which it is said, "gold comes from the North," is wholly misunderstood, when applied to trade in gold. The trade of which Job speaks was wholly with the South by way of the Red Sea, and the parallelism of that passage speaks of the golden splendour, in which God appeared from the North, as was clearly shown in the previous dialogues.

He seeth even to the ends of the earth,
 He looketh abroad under the whole heavens.
 And as he appointed their weight to the winds,
 And gave to the waters their measure,
 And established its law for the rain,
 And marked a path for the tempest,
 A path for the flashes of the lightning ;
 Then he saw it, and computed it,*
 He determined it, and searched it out.
 And to man he said ;
 " For thee, the fear of the Lord is wisdom,
 And to avoid evil, that is thy understanding."

* Wisdom here is not yet properly personified, as in the Proverbs of Solomon, and the poetry of Job is far older, than that in the writings of Solomon. The latter is brilliant, the former sublime ; the latter full of thought, and in a polished style, but has nothing of the energy and strength, which characterize the genius of this ancient Idumæan book. I wonder therefore how any one could imagine the author of Solomon's Song to be the poet of the book of Job ; two works at opposite extremes as to the style of poetry and the modes of thinking.

DIALOGUE IX.

Objections, which have been made against the Israelites as a people, and must also have a bearing upon the spirit of their poetry; their narrow, self-satisfied and exclusive views, their inactive or profligate ancestors, their denunciation and hatred of all the nations of the earth, as well as of the race, which had the nearest affinity with them. The point of view for investigating these objections. Of Ham's transgression and punishment. What this was, and how far it must necessarily fall upon Canaan. Of the drunkenness of Noah, the sojournings of Abraham, and the rights which the Canaanites themselves admitted him to have. Of his conduct in Egypt, his magnanimous and noble character. Of his being the friend of God. Description of it, as the most calm and contemplative ideal of humanity, as the highest aim of the choice, and vocation of a people, i. e. of a national cultivation. First characteristick of Hebrew poetry, its expressiveness of friendly communion with the Supreme Being. Passages from Isaiah respecting Abraham, as a pattern to his descendants. Of the delinquencies of the patriarchs, especially of Jacob. Whether he received the name Israel in a dream. Explanation of the narrative of his wrestling with the Elohim. Of the conflicts of mortals with Gods among other nations. The essential distinction between them, and the symbolical import of this narrative. Jacob's dream of the ladder that reached to heaven, and his notions of the angels. Whether the blessings, which the patriarchs pronounced upon their sons, showed partiality. Blessing of Ishmael. Description of Hagar's wandering in the desert. Blessing of Esau and of Jacob. Glance at the land of Canaan. Second characteristick of its poetry, its relation to the promised land and to the patriarchs. Appendix. Poetical extracts from Job for marking his character, as an ideal of the happiness, of the moral character, and virtue of an Oriental prince.

ALCIPHON. The belief in providence, which you lately unfolded to me out of the writings and from the history of the Hebrew nation, and which you extolled as a flower full of beauty and interest for the human race, has no adversary in me. I could wish rather, that the writings of this people had in fact unfolded it in a form unmixed with national peculiarities, and interesting to the whole human race. But

has it been done in this form ? Was not this belief among them a mere national faith, so narrow and exclusive, that it might rather be considered offensive and hostile, than friendly to the race. They were God's peculiar people, chosen and set apart even in their ancestors. No blessing comes upon any new offspring in the successive generations of their patriarchs, but a curse must at the same time fall upon a neighbouring race, even if it be that of a brother or a near kinsman. Noah is not content with blessing Shem, he must at the same moment pronounce a curse upon Ham. Isaac cannot receive a blessing, but Ishmael must be thrust out from his home and family ; nor Jacob, without corresponding and injurious neglect of Esau. So it is throughout. Moses and Joshua slay the ancient and rightful inhabitants, in order to convert to the benefit of God's chosen people a country, which according to human laws did not belong to them. You know how much sarcasm and how many invectives are uttered respecting the history of this people, in which I have no participation, because they often give pain to innocent persons, who have no knowledge of the subject or of the times. Yet it is difficult to controvert the leading idea, that this people, even from their origin, cherished narrow, exclusive, and arrogant views, which have impressed themselves also upon their poetry, and have spoiled the best part of it by a mixture of denunciations and hatred of other nations. And yet I can discover in the history of their patriarchs no appearance of extraordinary merit. What heroick deeds have they to exhibit, which would not be far outdone by the records of other nations ? What great names, on which the glory of their race can be even tolerably well sustained ? Can they appeal to Noah, an example of drunkenness ; to Abraham, who disowned his wife in Egypt ; to the timid Isaac ; to Jacob, who so cunningly overreached his father, his brother, his father-in-law, and the whole world ; to the incestuous Judah ; the revengeful Simeon and Levi ; or finally to Moses, who with

hard-hearted insensibility cut off whole nations ? And could such men be the founders of a nation chosen of God, of God's peculiar people ? In this people all the tribes of the earth are to be blessed ; and yet they imprecate curses upon all nations, though they know only their names, and often, in the songs of their prophets, weakly and with hostile feelings rejoice, that their future king will at last reduce them all to subjection. They have no representation more delightful to them, than that of their king coming from Mount Seir, as a treader of the wine-press, and with garments dyed in the blood of a kindred people. The whole earth must be laid waste, in order that their poor and barren land, their race despised by all nations, may bear rule alone. Answer me now, my friend, in regard to these objections, but, I beg of you, not mystically and theologically ; of such vindications I have read enough and more than enough. Why did not Abraham continue where he was ? Why must the unoffending Canaan pay the forfeit of his father's indiscretion or villainy ? or the unfortunate Esau suffer, because his mother cooked a kid, before he could prepare his wild venison ? And yet on these old wives' tales depends all the peculiar distinction of this people, their ancestral honour, and the lofty triumph of their prophecies and Psalms. The most beautiful poetry in the world becomes poor and contemptible, when it grounds itself with an exclusive and hostile feeling on traditions of this sort.

EUTHYMIOS. You have overwhelmed me, my friend, with objections, which I have reason to be thankful, do not affect my own race. I am no Hebrew, and have no interest in this people, as a people. They were not certainly chosen for their own worthiness, and no one has exposed their weakness and shame with more force, than their own prophets. I willingly grant you, that they greatly misapprehended the purpose of their election and peculiar privileges, and sadly profaned with superstition and idolatry, with stupid pride, obsequious vanity, and other vices, that Palladium, for which

they assumed far too much credit to themselves,—their faith in Jehovah, as the only and the true God. But we are not here called upon, as it seems to me, to vindicate the nation, as a nation, much less their national prejudices and vices, but the purpose of God in the events of their history, and the flowers of that poetick growth, which, in the results of its development has actually, (for this is matter of fact and no theological mysticism), produced fruits for the benefit of so many other nations. And since we are conversing about a shepherd race, let us recline under this spreading tree! We will imagine it to be Abraham's terebinth tree at Mamre, and even speak in the tones of calm contemplation, like the patriarchal shepherds; not with the artful wit of Voltaire, nor with the dark malignity of Bolingbroke and Morgan. The tranquillity of nature around us awakens peaceful emotions and we will endeavour to keep at peace with these forms of ancient simplicity.

First, then, of Noah. You call the conduct of Ham towards him indiscretion or villainy. Let it be the one or the other, you must give the father permission to punish it.

A. To punish it?

E. That is the sense of it; and I know not why, when we fall upon a word that is misunderstood, we should not put an intelligible one in the place of it. The father was a king in his own family, and had sovereign power even over the life of his sons. Noah was the second Adam, the patriarch of a new world. He must appear to his family almost in the character of a God; for it was only through him and for his sake, that they had been delivered from the general judgment. Now no greater offence could have been committed against him, than Ham, who was himself a man of mature years, and had sons, committed in this case. You know with what rigour the laws of filial reverence and modesty in domestick intercourse are guarded in the East, and in a period so early were rightfully regarded as sacred. Those members which Ham

treated with mockery, were held sacred. He offended his brothers, and was guilty, if you will allow the expression, of violating the injured majesty of his father. His transgression was domestick, and so was the punishment. He had insulted the patriarch of the race, and punishment was inflicted upon the son and his offspring. In short, he was deprived of the rights pertaining to a son, and was degraded to the condition of a family servant among his brethren.

A. Is that the import of the words ?

E. Look and see.

Cursed be Canaan ;

Let him be a servant of servants to his brethren.

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem,

And let Canaan be his servant.

Let the Elohim enlarge Japheth,

Let him dwell in the tents of Shem,

And let Canaan be his servant.

Whether Canaan participated in his father's offence or not, he naturally participated in the punishment ; for when the father was deprived of his filial rights, his children must suffer with him. So it is now in regard to all family misfortunes, and it seems to me, that Noah inflicted a punishment, which, according to the then prevailing customs and mode of thinking, if not light, was yet not unjust ; ignominy with ignominy, scorn with scorn, insult with insult.

A. But why was Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, alone named ? for Ham had older sons. A wishful glance at the land of Canaan seems to have had its influence here.

E. If it were so, then it was an application merely of the tradition to a case, in which the Israelites were more particularly concerned. You know, that the national rights of ancient nations depended on such traditions, and the relations of the tribes in their origin to each other. In the East, in India, I might say, indeed among all small tribes, which remain attached to their original stock, the same is true, even at the present day. Yet I believe, that, as to the fact, Ca-

naah, the youngest son, participated in the transgression, and perhaps the peculiar expression, "Noah knew what his younger son had done unto him," points to this. The narrative is too concise to decide this point; and, if it did, the privilege of indulging misanthropy, and of conquering the Canaanites, wherever found, could not be given by this sort of prophetick narrative. Jacob imprecated curses upon his two sons, Simeon and Levi, even on his death-bed, because they had revenged the deepest stain upon the honour of his house with the blood of a Canaanitish family.

A. And yet Joshua destroyed them without mercy.

E. We will speak of that hereafter; let us confine ourselves for the present to the history of the patriarchs. You called Noah a drunkard. I have no doubt you will retract the expression, when you read the narrative in its connexion. It was the first experiment in the cultivation of an unknown plant, which might have resulted in the same way to Bacchus himself.

A. Forget the word, and let it pass. Why did not Abraham remain where he was, in his own country? His leaving it was the occasion of the subsequent mischief.

E. Because he was a Nomade, and all Nomades live a wandering life. They are wanderers still, even to the present day, though three thousand years, it may be presumed, must have made a considerable difference in the populousness of these countries. Besides, it was not he that first became a wanderer; his father was a Nomade before him, and his father's father. The brothers of Peleg had wandered with their tribes even down to Arabia, and the brothers of Abraham, and his brothers' sons, had planted the best countries of the neighbouring region, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Chaldæa. In regard to physical advantages, Abraham obtained by no means the best country, and God promised on this account to make his portion good with blessings of a different kind. And finally, in the land of Canaan there was no collision of

interests between Abraham and any one there. He moved about here and there, as a godlike prince, showed his magnanimity to Lot, and towards the kings whom he delivered from their enemies, and his integrity of character to the Canaanites, of whom he purchased a burying place. This they offered him as a gift, but he would not receive it without paying its price ; and you are aware what they allowed him along with it. Obviously, the occupation in common with them of their country for himself and his latest posterity. Where the fathers slept, there must the children sleep also. This was the first principle of national rights among all ancient nations. " We will meet you at the graves of our fathers," was the common expression in maintaining their rights against the encroachment of their enemies. In truth—one who would convict Abraham of misanthropy, of oppression, of self-seeking, and narrowness of soul, must discover some new history of his life.

A. Yet he dissembled, and disowned his wife in Egypt.

E. It was not however for him, but for the politick Egyptians to be ashamed, that a stranger, though even upon half groundless apprehensions, must do what he did ; and the result proved that the fear was not wholly groundless. Besides, we must not regard a patriarchal shepherd, as a gallant lover, or a knight by profession, who is ready to die a thousand deaths for his mistress. Abraham committed an error ; and I am not displeased, that in the history of a great man the weakness of being needlessly cautious stands recorded. In the mean time, the narrative no where says what vulgar slanderers, in their ignorance of the ancient customs of the East, represent. We will overlook, then, the mistake of a herdsman, who knew not how to conduct himself at court, and observe with what uprightness, dignity, benevolence, and simplicity, he conducted in his tent, his own shepherd's lodge. Can any thing be more noble, than the mode of his intercession for Sodom, his declaring himself to the

king of Salem respecting the spoils, and to Lot? Can any thing be more beautifully pastoral in its character, than his reception of the angels, and entertainment of them beneath the tree! In reading it, one is transported into the very region, and breathes the true spirit, of pastoral innocence, and expects, as it were, angels to present themselves before his own hospitable and simple tent. Finally, his intercourse with God himself, how full of interest and instruction! With what calm and unquestioning faith, when his divine friend required it, did he offer up the dearest object which he possessed, that on which all his hopes were suspended, which he had waited and longed for, as the highest prize of his life! Pardon me, my friend, for saying, that I scarcely know any thing to be compared with this calm, heroick faith, this artless confidence between a simple herdsman and—the God of heaven. The poetry of no other people has any thing to equal it. The poetry of other nations represents men as holding intercourse with false Gods, with Genii, and departed heroes, but not with the true and only God of heaven and earth, and in a way so calm and confiding. The stranger has no other friend but God, who sent him a pilgrim into this land of strangers; but him he holds fast as the best of all friends. What delicate passages occur in the conversation and intercourse of God with him, where he comforts and directs him, encourages him in regard to the future, gives him now a token of his covenant and friendship, now a new name, then memorial signs, and requires of him, now this, and now that return of affectionate confidence.

“Fear thou not Abram,
 I am thy shield thy exceeding great reward.”
 And he brought him forth abroad, and said,
 “Look towards heaven, and tell the stars.
 Art thou able to number them?”
 And he said “so shall thy seed be.”
 And he had faith in Jehovah,
 And he counted his faith to him
 For righteousness.

So long as artless simplicity affects the human heart, so long will the beauty of such passages be felt. So also, when God makes a covenant with Abraham, and condescends in the form of a column of smoke to pass through between the separated parts of the offering, and like a mere mortal to confirm his covenant by an oath. It was a covenant of friendship for Abraham and his posterity, which was to make him an example of the severest virtue, and his race distinguished for the same characteristick ; which was to set them apart for no other end but to be the tribe, in which all the tribes of the earth should be blessed. Do you not discover in this purpose of God, this ideal of a national cultivation, something great and sublime ? And where do you find it, considered merely as a preconceived purpose, as an ideal, among all the other nations of the earth ? Their noblest purposes were nothing higher, than the attainment of political cultivation for themselves, or of power and dominion over other nations.

A. But where then does the corresponding result show itself among this people ?

E. In the patriarch of the race at least. He stands forth as a sort of type and symbol of the covenant. He must leave his paternal home for a dwelling with strangers, and be content with a pilgrimage in a foreign and uninviting country. Long he waited for the promise, and saw it not. When at last he received an earnest of it in Isaac, he was required to offer up even him as a sacrifice. You see that, in its symbolical character, it is all as it should be in its relation to God's covenant people. Friendship with God must be the purpose of their election, but a self-denying, self-sacrificing friendship. The virtue, to which Abraham was educated, was a retiring, unpublished, and silent virtue, but on that account the more noble and beautiful. It is trust in God even in the greatest difficulties, and in regard to the ultimate future, i. e. faith. A hero in faith, that is, in simple unaf-

fect ed greatness of soul, in an intimate communion of the heart with the most pure and holy Being—this was Abraham. Such must his people be—and a hero of this sort is a higher development of the human spirit, than a hero with his fist, or the weapons of war, or even with political craft and intrigue.

A. So the poetry of this people, then, should be called the poetry of the covenant.

E. You have the right name, only we must not interpret it in a theosophick and mystical sense. It should be understood of a poetry expressive of friendship between man and his Maker; the child-like poetry, in which feeble men express their conceptions, and feelings in regard to that Supreme Being, who holds to them the relation of a father; which reminds them of his covenant, directs them to his given word, and strengthens their hearts by recounting the doings of the Most High. Hence the influence of this poetry upon all simple and child-like hearts, upon all pure heroick souls, especially in times of distress, and in prayer, under sickness and suffering. It forms a bond of connexion between men and (not idols, not Genii, not departed heroes, but) God, the father of men, and the controller of their destiny. How delightful, in this view of it, is the simple story of the patriarchs! Their outward condition and worldly fortunes were not splendid. Few and evil, says the last of them, have the years of my life been. They are on a pilgrimage, without rest or an abiding place, and misfortunes are not wanting to their families. But God is always near them; his angels accompany them, the Elohim are round about them, and the land is made sacred, as it were, by their footsteps. And in their dwellings were preserved the purity of ancient manners, faith in God, child-like simplicity and devotion, as a sacred treasure transmitted from the primeval world. In this respect, too, they were for the poetry of later times the ground of much beautiful and eloquent imagery.

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness,*
 Ye that continue faithful to Jehovah.
 Look unto the rock, whence ye are hewn,†
 Look to the pit, whence ye are digged.
 Look unto Abraham, your father,
 And unto Sarah, that bare you.
 For I called him the one alone,‡
 And blessed him, and increased him.
 So now will Jehovah comfort Zion,
 Will comfort all her waste places,
 Will make her wilderness like Eden,
 Her desert like the garden of Jehovah.
 Joy and gladness shall dwell in them,
 Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

Observe here the title of honour given to Abraham—the one

* Isa. li. 1—3.

† Without doubt, reference is had to this passage in Matt. iii. 9. The Israelites trusted in the circumstance of their being children of Abraham; and the prophet of the wilderness says, God can from these stones hew out children to Abraham. At least the figure was known from the expression of Isaiah.

‡ From this may be explained the obscure passage, Malachi ii. 14. 15. which condemns and opposes the practice of putting away one's wife.

The Lord is witness between thee
 And the wife of thy youth,
 Whom thou despisest, and rejectest;
 And yet she is thy companion,
 And the wife of thy covenant.
 So did not the alone one,
 Though he longed for children.
 What then did the one?
 He hoped for them from God.

A peculiar emphasis is given here to the expression, one alone, which was already understood from Isaiah, as a name of distinction for Abraham. He was the alone one, from whom the race could and must be derived. He was old, Sarah was advanced in years, and yet he did not repudiate her, nor indulge in anger against her.

So watch ye also over your eager desires,
 And do not injustice to the wives of your youth.

alone ! a rock, which gives itself up to God, and out of which God hews his chosen people—what various applications may be made of it for the confirmation of his people's faith.

Look down from heaven, thy holy habitation,
 Look from the seat of thy glory and majesty.
 Where is thy zeal ? where is thy strength ?
 Thy moving, thy compassionate heart
 Is now hardened against us !

And yet thou art our father,
 Though Abraham be ignorant of us,
 And Israel acknowledge us not ;
 Thou Lord art our father, our redeemer,
 That is thy name from everlasting.

And wherefore hast thou suffered us
 To wander so far from thy ways ?
 Why hath our heart hardened itself,
 Oh Jehovah ! from thy fear ?
 O ! turn thee again to thy servants ;
 We are thine inheritance forever.

Thus God has taken upon himself the paternal rights of Abraham, who has transferred his children to his care, in the interchange of friendly and heartfelt confidence.

A. All very fair and good ; but what say you, my friend, to the faults of the patriarchs ?

E. They are human failings, and the very fact, that they are recounted, that in their history nothing is kept back and concealed, makes their shepherd tale, considered as a pastoral narrative merely, invaluable. The timid Isaac, the crafty Jacob, stand forth in their doings ; but you will not deny, that the craftiness of the latter was always recompensed with evil ; and in his old age, like Ulysses, he exhibited among these patriarchal herdsmen a character well tried and approved. His history is an instructive mirror of the human heart,* and God himself wiped away from Jacob, arrived at mature age,

* Sterne has an instructive, though too witty sermon on the fortunes of Jacob, which exhibits his experience of the law of retribution.

those stains, which in his youth were associated with his name. "Thou shalt no more be called Jacob, (a supplanter), but Israel, a hero of God, shall thy name be;" a title of distinction which the poetry of this people also may deservedly bear. Not physical strength is celebrated in it, but divine heroism, prayer, and faith.

A. It has not acquired this title however, as Jacob did his, by a conflict in a dream.

E. In a dream? I perceive you use an expression, not new indeed, but one which—often as it is repeated—contradicts the narrative when taken in its connexion. Jacob had divided the encampment and the tents, from fear of a nocturnal assault from his brother. He then placed himself at a distance from the tents, not indeed that he might sleep, but expressly not to sleep.

A. And what did he then?

E. What preceded we may very easily infer from the circumstances.* He prayed, he wrestled with God in prayer; and there must be some visible symbol, that his heroick faith prevailed with God. Elohim appeared, not Jehovah; and you know that in the history of Jacob, as well as in the earlier traditions, the word is used distinctively. The host of God revealed themselves to Jacob, as two wings of an army encamped, and conceptions of angels occupied also his thoughts. And lo! there appeared to him a hero, the divine form of a heavenly warrior, and wrestled with Jacob. It appeared and vanished with the obscure shadows of the dawn; in short, read the beautiful night vision itself, which, even in the tone and colouring of the narrative, seems floating amid the dreamy and troubled shadows of the night.†

And Jacob stayed alone by night,
Then wrestled one with him, till break of day,
And yet prevailed not over him.

* Gen. xxxii. 10—12.
20

† Gen. xxxii. 24.

And when he saw that he prevailed not,
 He touched his hip upon the joint.
 The joint of Jacob's hip was wrenched,
 While thus he wrestled with him.
 The man said, "now let me go,
 For morning breaketh."
 He said, "I will not let thee go, until thou bless me."
 Then said the man, "what is thy name?"
 He answered him, "my name is Jacob."
 He said, "thou shalt no more be called Jacob,
 Hero of God shall be thy name.
 With Gods and men hast thou conflicted bravely,
 And hast prevailed."
 And Jacob asked, and said,
 "Tell me also thy name."
 He said, "why dost thou ask my name?"
 And then he blessed him there.
 And Jacob called the place Peniel: for, he said,
 "I saw here face to face the Elohim
 And yet my life is saved."
 Then rose the sun, as he went forth from Peniel,
 And Jacob halted on his hip.

E. Is there a word here about a dream? Is it not all as plain historical narrative, as the mode of Jacob's dividing the sheep? Nay, consider what honour could have been attached to the name, which was given to the patriarch and to the whole race. The dreamer had wrenched his hip in his sleep, and therefore he was called Israel, a godlike hero, his whole race inherited the name for the same reason, and Jehovah himself came down once and again in order to fasten upon him the really ironical and reproachful title of a hero in his dreams. All this too is recounted in a family tradition. Do you not feel the absurdity of this representation in every particular?

A. It is so, I confess. And the name, Elohim, as you have explained it in a former conversation, frees me from all doubt. A conflict with Gods, with spirits, with heroick forms, was nothing strange or unheard of in ancient times;

may, according to the representations of the poets, it was commonly considered as the highest proof of heroick power in man. In Homer, gods and men are in continual conflict ; and Ossian's Fingal also on one occasion by night contended with a giant spirit. In the East conceptions of the kind must have been common.

E. According to the representations both of their poetry and history, their most ancient heroes must often have conflicted in this manner with spiritual beings and giants. But let us not confound this artless narrative with such fables and monstrous exaggerations, as belong to the later traditions. How tranquil and how correspondent to the shepherd's character is every thing in this narrative ! The being, with whom Jacob wrestled, is not named, does not name himself, and leaves it to be inferred, who he was, from the name alone which he gave to Jacob. Jacob expresses no triumph, relates the story to no one, and wonders like a simple herdsman, how he could have contended face to face with the Elohim, and have escaped with his life.—But the finest part of the whole is its inward sense, by which the patriarch was taught how needless it was for him to stand in fear of Esau, when he had prevailed with Jehovah in prayer, and with the Elohim by the power of his arm. So the prophet* explains it, and the figurative sense is plain from the place, the time, and the connexion of the narrative.

A. And thus the vision in this case expressed to the man in his alarm, what, on a former occasion, the vision of a ladder reaching to heaven expressed to the timid youth.

E. The same thing ; only in a manner adapted to the character of a man. He must not dream, but earn for himself the name of a hero. The parallel, which you have adduced, is however, a very significant one. The vision shows the child-like conceptions, which the shepherd youth entertained of God and the angels, and we may regard the dream

* Hos. xii. 4. 5.

as a true pastoral representation. Will you read it? The evening is gradually approaching, and the sun is going down in tranquillity and beauty.

A.

He reached a place and spent the night,
For the sun was now already set.
Then he took a stone from off the place,
And laid it for his pillow,
And laid him down to sleep.
And there he dreamed, and lo! a ladder stood
Extended high above the earth,
Whose top reached up to heaven,
And messengers of God went up and down upon it.
And lo! Jehovah stood above and said,
I am Jehovah the God of thy fathers."

* * * * *

And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said,
Surely, Jehovah is in this place,
And yet I knew it not!" And he was sore afraid, and said,
"How dreadful is this place,
This is none other but the house of God!
Here is the gate of heaven."

And Jacob took the stone, at break of day,
And set it for a monument,
And poured upon it oil, and called the place Bethel.
And Jacob vowed a vow, and said,
"If God henceforth be with me,
And guard me in the way I go,
And give me food and raiment,
That I return and see my father's house in peace;
Then shall Jehovah be my God,
And this, which I have placed a monument,
Shall be the house of God!"

E. You see here the artless conceptions of the youthful herdsman. He knew not, that his father's God would be found except in his father's house. He was terrified, that he had slept without knowing it, upon holy ground, as it were, in the outer court of God's own dwelling place. He had seen

in his dream its doors open, and by a vow proffered to the place—a house of God, because God in so peculiar a manner inhabited it. If angels here ascended and descended upon a ladder, which reached to heaven, it would be easy to suppose, that one of them, like the Elohim in strength and dignity, might wrestle with Jacob. Have you any thing further to object to these pastoral narratives ?

A. The gross partiality of the patriarchs in blessing their sons, since, according to the belief of the race, the whole fortune of their posterity depended on this last prophetick declaration.

E. How say you ? Did this depend on the will of the father ? Was not Isaac in fact partial to Esau ? and would not Abraham have contented himself with Ishmael ? How much pain did it cost Jacob, that he must pass by his three oldest sons ! and indeed was one of those whom we have named omitted, so far as regarded temporal blessings ? Esau went to meet Jacob as a prince ; while Jacob was and continued to be a stranger and dweller in tents. Ishmael dwelt in his deserts like the wild animal, with which he is compared, free and joyous. His posterity boast of their country, as one given them by the special favour of God, in which they follow their vocation, and wish for nothing better. The prophecy,

He shall be a fugitive* from man,
His hand shall be opposed to all,
And all men's hands opposed to him.
He dwells before the face of all his brethren,

is fulfilled in the Ishmaelites, and in its strict and proper sense. Let us read the touching and truly interesting story of the exiled Hagar, wandering in the desert. You will perceive in this, that the tone and style of the narrative in these traditions has nothing of misanthropy or of hard-hearted insensibility.

* A wild ass. Gen. xvi. 12.

The water in the bottle was exhausted,
 And Hagar cast the child beneath a tree,
 And went away and sat with looks averted,
 The distance of a bow-shot off.
 For Hagar said, "I may not see
 The child while dying." Thus she sat,
 And lifted up her voice and wept.
 Then God the crying child regarded,
 And from the heavens his angel called,
 "What aileth thee, Hagar, fear not,
 For God hath heard the voice of the child,
 Where he is lying.—
 Arise, and lift him up,
 And hold him with thine hand,
 For I will make him, yet a mighty nation."
 Then God the eyes of Hagar opened,
 And she beheld a well of water,
 And went and filled her bottle with it,
 And gave the child to drink.
 And God was with him, and he grew,
 And was a dweller in the desert,
 And he became an archer.

In the same affecting manner is related the history of the
 sorrowful Esau, when he failed of obtaining the blessing,
 which had fallen to Jacob. Let us compare the terms of
 the blessings bestowed upon both, in order to observe the
 difference.

THE BLESSING BESTOWED BY ISAAC UPON ESAU.

In the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling,
 And enriched with the dews of heaven above.
 By thy sword shall thy life be sustained,
 And thy brother shalt thou serve.
 Yet the time shall arrive for thee to rule,
 And his yoke shalt thou break from off thy neck.

ISAAC'S PROPHEITICK BLESSING UPON JACOB.

"Come near now, and kiss me my son."
 And Jacob came near, and kissed him.

Then smelled he the smell of his raiment,
 And blessed him, and said,
 "Behold I smell my son, as the smell of a field,
 A field, which God hath blessed.
 God give thee, therefore, of the dew of heaven,
 The fatness of earth, and plenty of corn and wine.
 Let the people serve thee,
 And the nations bow down to thee,
 Be thou ruler over thy brethren,
 And let thy mother's sons be subject to thee.
 Cursed be every one that curseth thee,
 And blessed be he, that blesseth thee."

Do you not perceive in both the voice of destiny uttered even against the will of the father? Under the form of Esau the other is fated to receive the blessing, and the father to utter for him what he intended to utter against him. All your doubts and objections against these exclusive declarations fall to the ground, when you consider, that they were not temporal blessings, to which the chosen son was destined. His posterity were to guard the name and worship of Jehovah, and, from the time of Moses onward, to bear the yoke of the law—a blessing, from which most nations would gladly have been relieved.

A. There was, however, it seems, some special regard to Canaan!

E. And what was there so important in this small country? The race must have a habitation in some part of the world. Their poetry has indeed greatly extolled this little corner of the earth, and almost every mountain, brook, and valley, is celebrated by its praises; but observe it is always praised, as the land favoured of God, as the land of promise, and in no other way. Its distinctive name and character were derived from the promises concerning it, for it was called the promised land, and you will find, that the poetry connected with Canaan treats every thing in this point of view—its relation to God and the patriarchs. Zion, Lebanon,

Carmel, are mountains of God ; the streams, by which memorable deeds were performed, are the rivers of God ; the land is the holy land, marked by the footsteps of God and the fathers, and the pledge of their being the chosen people. In the history of other nations there are indications, that they designated here and there a small piece of their soil, as made sacred by the presence of their God ; but I know no people whose poetry like theirs has made the poverty of their country exhibit the fulness of God, and consecrated its narrow limits as a theatre for displaying the Majesty of Jehovah. Even now the great mass of this dispersed race delude themselves with hopes drawn from this source, because the traditions of the race, its laws, its poetry, every thing has relation to the promised land, and, as it were, without a country to rest upon, the tree of their hopes still flourishes and waves in the air above.

A. Uninteresting enough, too, for us, since we are not of that country, and cannot read the denunciations of their prophets against other countries with the enthusiasm, with which they listened to them. All their golden dreams of the glory of this narrow region, under a king so long waited for and still to be waited for, seem to us mere dreams of folly ; and a greater part of their poetry is to us equally empty and unmeaning.

E. We shall speak of that in treating of the prophets. *Surgamus, solent esse graves sedentibus umbræ.* It would give me great pleasure, if I had removed some of your doubts in regard to the early history of this people, and from these traditions of the race placed in a clearer light the characteristic traits of its poetry. It is in a word the poetry of herdsmen ; a poetry breathing the spirit of their covenant relation, that is, of the family bond, by which they were united, and the relation of friendship, in which the patriarch of the race stood to God ; in a word it is the poetry of Canaan as the land of promise. Read it in this spirit, and it will no

longer be unmeaning. But if you would see another ideal of an Oriental hero, distinguished for wisdom, happiness, and quiet but superior virtue, let it be Job. I will point out to you the passages, which place his character in the fairest light. Would that all christian emirs thought, believed, and lived, as well as he did.

A P P E N D I X .

I. PICTURE OF THE PROSPERITY, THE ACTIVITY, AND DIGNITY OF AN ORIENTAL PRINCE.*

Oh that I were as in the ancient times,
The days when God preserved me !
His light shone clear upon my head,†
And by his light I walked through darkness.

As once I was in the days of my youth,
When God took counsel with me, in my tent,
When the Almighty yet was with me,
And round about me stood my slaves.

And where I went, a stream of milk flowed on,
The rock poured out for me rivers of oil.
When from my house I went to the assembly
And spread my carpet in the place of meeting,
The young men saw me and concealed themselves,
The aged rose up, and continued standing.
Princes refrained from talking,
And laid their hands upon their mouths ;
The voice of counsellors was silent ;
He whose ear heard me, counted me blessed,
And he whose eye saw me, bore witness to me,
Because I delivered the poor that cried,
The fatherless that had none to help him.
He that was ready to perish blessed me,
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy,

* Job. xxix.

† A lamp was hung in the tent of an Oriental. The glory of his protecting God is here represented as taking its place. God gave him light in darkness ; sat in council with him in his tent, and whatever he undertook prospered.

I put on righteousness and it clothed me,
 My judgment was as a robe and a diadem.
 I was eyes to the blind,
 And feet was I to the lame,
 I was a father to the poor,
 And searched out the cause of strangers.
 I brake the jaws of the wicked,
 And plucked the spoil from his teeth.

Then I said, I shall perish with my nest,*
 I shall multiply my days as the phoenix.
 My root shall be nourished by the waters,
 The dew lay all night upon my branches.
 My strength in me shall be refreshed,
 My bow renewed in my hand.

Men gave ear to me and waited,
 They kept silence at my counsel.
 After my words they spake not again,
 For my speech dropped upon them as the dew.

They waited for my words as for the rain,
 And opened their mouths as for the latter rain.
 If I laughed at them they were not offended,
 And no one saddened the joy of my countenance.

I chose for them and sat as chief;
 I dwelt as a king in the midst of my army,
 As a comforter among the mourners.

2. PICTURE OF MAGNANIMITY AND UNSHAKEN HOPE IN ADVERSITY.

[After all the messages communicating his misfortunes, his losses of property and children, were brought to Job in rapid succession, the book proceeds with a calm tone, as follows.]

Then Job stood up,
 And rent his mantle,
 And shaved his head,†

* The Phoenix is obviously intended here; only through a double sense of the word, the figure of the bird is immediately changed for that of the palm-tree, an evidence, that an analogy between the two was noticed and pointed out in the East.

† Not a token of impatience in the East, but of grief.

And cast himself upon the earth,
 And worshipped, and said,
 "Naked came I from my mothers womb,
 And naked shall I return thither.*
 Jehovah hath given,
 Jehovah hath taken away,
 Blessed be the Majesty of Jehovah."

[When his friends pressed him with severity, and threatened him with yet severer judgments from God on account of secret crimes, when the members of his household and his relatives deserted, disowned, and contemned him, he uttered his feelings in the affecting language, which follows.]

All my inward friends abhorred me ;
 They whom I loved are turned against me ;
 My bone cleaveth to my skin and my flesh,
 And scarcely the skin in my teeth,
 Have I brought away as a spoil.†
 Have pity, have pity upon me, my friends,
 For the hand of God is heavy upon me.
 Why do ye persecute me, as God hath done ?
 And are not satisfied with my flesh.
 Oh that my words were now written,
 That they were printed in a book !
 That they were written in iron and lead,
 And graven in the rock forever !
 " I know that my avenger liveth,||

* The womb of the mother and of the earth are often connected in this way in the East.

† Job. xix. 19.

‡ The figure is taken from the prey, which wild beasts carry away in their teeth ; his skin is his poor and wretched body, which alone he had escaped with, (not the skin upon his teeth). His friends are represented as carnivorous animals, which gnaw upon his skin, upon the poor remnant of his life.

|| These words in their connexion are so clear, that it is surprising they should have been so often mistaken. His friends had forsaken him, he had yet one friend, one relative, who would be his avenger, (this was the duty of the best friend and nearest relative) and this friend, as the sequel shows, is God. He shall stand upon the arena, and draw the sword in his behalf, the sword of the avenger and the judge. He shall

At last shall he step forth upon the scene.
 Though they tear and devour this my skin,
 Yet in my living body shall I see God.
 I shall see him, as my deliverer,
 Mine eye shall behold him, as mine,
 For whom so long my heart fainted."
 There shall ye then say,
 Wherefore did we persecute him?
 Then shall the root of my cause
 Be at length discovered.
 Be afraid for his glittering sword,
 It is a sword of wrath, that revengeth injustice,
 That will show you, there is a judgment.

3. MORAL SENTIMENTS OF AN IDUMÆAN PRINCE.*

I have made a covenant with my eyes,
 Why then should I look upon a maiden?
 What portion should I then have in God?
 What inheritance with God from on high?
 Doth not destruction follow the wicked?
 And open shame the workers of iniquity?
 Therefore I thought, he seeth my way,
 He counteth over all my steps.
 Did I ever tread in the path of the hypocrite?
 Or my foot hasten after deception?
 (Let me be weighed in an even balance,
 And God will then see my integrity.)
 Did my steps ever turn from the way?
 Or my heart steal after my eyes?
 Or any blot cleave to my hand?
 Then may I sow and another eat,
 And what I have planted another root up.

be for him, and not for his friends. Job's heart recognises him as his, (his friend, his kinsman) since on earth all had forsaken him. Then will the root of his cause, his rectitude, be found out. I know nothing surpassing this firm and noble confidence, which moreover, though not entirely in Job's sense, was fully justified. I could wish, that men would agree in this interpretation, and deal no more in subtleties in regard to this passage.

* Job. xxxi.

If ever my heart went after a woman,
 And I laid wait at the door of my friend,
 Then let my wife be the slave of a stranger,
 Let her be dishonoured of others.
 For that would be a crime even in human courts,
 A fire that consumeth even to destruction,
 And would burn out my prosperity to the roots.

Did I ever refuse his right to my servant,
 And my maid, in a just cause with me?
 What then should I do, if God stood up?
 If he enquired of it what should I answer?
 Did not he, that made me, make him also?
 Were we not formed alike in the womb?

Have I withheld from the needy his desire,
 And suffered the widow's eye to fail for food?
 Have I eaten my morsel myself alone?
 Nor let the fatherless partake thereof?
 Who had grown up with me from a child,
 That I should be to him as a father,
 Whom I had guided from the womb.

Have I seen the wretched without clothing,
 And the miserable go without a covering?
 That his limbs have not blessed me,
 And he been warmed with the fleece of my sheep.

Have I raised my hand against the orphan,
 Because I saw partiality in the judgment seat?
 Then let my shoulder fall from the joint,
 Let the bone of my arm be broken.
 I must now have trembled at God's justice,
 And against his highness I could not endure.

If I have made riches my trust,
 And said to gold, thou art my confidence,
 And rejoiced in the greatness of my wealth,
 Because my hand had gained so much.

If I beheld the sun when it shined,
 Or the moon going forth in brightness,
 And my heart was secretly enticed,
 That my mouth hath kissed my hand for them,
 That too were a crime for the judges,
 For I should have abjured the God of heaven.

Have I rejoiced at the fall of my enemy,

And exulted when evil came upon him ?
 No ! my tongue uttered no evil word,
 Nor any imprecation against him,
 When the men of my tent said,
 " Oh that we had his flesh, it should satisfy us."*

No stranger need lodge in the street,
 I opened my doors to the wanderer.

Did I hide my faults like a mean man,
 And cover up my crime in a corner ?
 Because I was afraid of the multitude,
 And the contempt of families terrified me,
 And keep silence and go not in publick ?

Oh that I had a judge, who would hear me !
 See my defence ; answer me, O ! my God !
 Oh that one would write my cause in a book !
 As a mantle would I lay it on my shoulders,
 As a diadem would I bind it to my turban,
 I would tell all my steps before him,
 As a prince would I draw near unto him.

If my land cry out against me,
 And the furrows thereof complain,
 Because I enjoy the fruit without money,
 And oppress the soul of the owner,
 Let thistles grow instead of wheat,
 And useless weeds instead of fruit.

* That is, though he were the bitterest enemy of my house and all
 was in a state of open violence.

DIALOGUE X.

Whether the language of the Hebrews was originally that of the Canaanites, and learned from them by the Hebrews. Improbability of this opinion, and facts at variance with it in the history and languages of the kindred descendants of Shem. That the Phenicians also were foreign settlers in Canaan. On what the right of the Shemites to this land, and to Asia generally, was grounded. How far religion was concerned in it. Difference between the Hamites and Shemites in their mode of life, religion, customs, and language. In what way these traditions among the Shemites were preserved. The history of Joseph and of the patriarchs back to Abraham. What we have before Abraham back to the flood. Relation of the members of this genealogical register. Whether Moses found it already existing. How it was formed into a genealogical chart. Whether we have in it a complete chart of the wanderings of the several races. View of what it must have been originally. Whether the account of the flood were handed down from the ark. Whether the deluge was universal. That the history of events before the deluge is connected with, and depends upon a few significant names. Examples of this. Whence these significant names were derived. Whether from prophecy, from translation, or a change of name. That the use of written characters perhaps originated in these significant names. How it arose. How the earliest traditions were probably preserved. Who was the discoverer of alphabetic writing. That only one alphabet exists, and that is the Shemitish. Whether the picture of creation was taken from Egyptian hieroglyphics. That the oldest traditions respecting Paradise came down from upper Asia. What in these traditions is fictitious. Whether the tower of Babel, the pillar of salt, Jacob's wrestling with God, are so. The song of Lamech, the meaning and the form of it. Of the style in other narratives. Difference of the traditions in regard to the use of the words Elohim and Jehovah. Appendix. The voice of antiquity.

ALCIPHON. We are at length come to the most important and general questions, which are connected with this subject, and perhaps have given ourselves very useless trouble, in our previous conversations, in deducing the poetry of the Hebrews from their patriarchal traditions. For may not

these patriarchal traditions themselves have been of later origin? Did not the Hebrews first learn the language, in which they are written, from their hereditary enemies the Canaanites? If so, they must of course have been put together at a later period, or Moses himself devised them.

EUTHYPHRON. Before the Hebrews came to Canaan then were they dumb, and had they no language?

A. Not so neither. Who knows what jargon they made use of? But the language in which these traditions are composed, is undeniably the language of Canaan, the Phenician language.

E. And from whom could the Phenicians have received it? Do you know of no dialects having a kindred relation to it? and were not these spoken by those, who were obviously Shemites? Syrian, Arabian, Chaldean, all were pure Shemitish races, having a kindred relation to Abraham and his fathers. The languages of their descendants, therefore, must also of necessity hold a corresponding relation. It is one of the fables of our own age, the meaning of which I could never yet comprehend, that the Hebrew language should be considered as originally and exclusively the language of the Canaanites. Even according to profane history, the Phenicians, after first dwelling upon the Red Sea, moved by degrees higher up, and planted themselves upon the coast of the Mediterranean. Now I will not undertake to decide, whether previously, before they pushed themselves among the pure Shemitish races, they did not speak a different language, just as the hypothesis is yet unproved, which has been hazarded in modern times, that the most ancient Egyptian language was kindred with the Hebrew. This last hypothesis seems to me to have little indeed to support it. The races of Ham and those descended from Shem seem entirely diverse from each other, as in manners, religion, modes of thinking, and political organization, so also in language. But let this be as it may, all the kindred races, as put down upon the genea-

logical table of Abraham, spoke dialects kindred to the Hebrew, and so his own race must have spoken a similar, and why not the proper Hebrew language, as it came downward from his ancestor Heber. All these traditions, and all the religious ideas in them, from the most ancient times, must have been originally conceived and expressed in a language having a kindred relation to the Arabick, Chaldee, and Syriack. This is proved by the book of Job, which so nearly resembles them. It is proved, too, by the radical forms of all the languages named. It is as strange and absurd to say, that the chapter giving an account of the creation is conceived after the style and manner of the Egyptians, as to say, that it was originally composed in the Mexican style. It is the same with the subsequent traditions. It was the Shemites, who brought down the name of Jehovah from the primeval world, and gave it a fixed place in their language, not the descendants of Ham and Mizraim. The alphabet, too, of the Phenicians was not invented by this people, for its names are Chaldee, not African. The Hebrew therefore is the original and proper language of the race of Eber, not a language begged, or borrowed of others; the Phenicians usurped it, as they did their country, and both probably for the sake of trade.

A. Why should they usurp their country? Was not the world open before them, and did the Shemites, this race of herdsmen, ever engage in the business of navigation? The coasts belonged to those who knew how to use them.

E. From the coasts, too, no one was disposed to drive them. In the mean time, from the manner in which the tribes were distinguished and divided off, it is plain, that they took certain directions in their wanderings, and in whatever direction it was, believed that certain regions and tracts of country were given them there. The tribes of Japheth went Northwards beyond the mountains, and roved at large with their tents, as the name itself implies. No descendants of

Shem followed them. Ham went towards the torrid countries of the South, and so to Africa, as partly the genealogical chart of Moses, and partly the name, indicates. If any tribes descended from him remained, as was the fact, here and there in Asia, or at a later date forced their way among the Shemites, they did so at the hazard of being expelled. The most ancient principle of national rights, which rests on such traditions of the origin and original prerogatives of tribes, could admit no other result. You see, then, why the Israelites believed themselves to have a well grounded right to the land of Canaan; for that they firmly believed. This is plain from the writings of Moses. Their lawgiver held his opinions on this point with a zeal and decision which left no possibility of doubt, because not only all the traditions and the whole history of the origin of his race proceeded from and was built upon this, but the thought could never for a moment be admitted, that both races could inhabit and possess the land in common. The Shemites looked upon the posterity of Ham as a race of servants, with which even the unassuming and complaisant Abraham admitted throughout of no intimate connexion. Eliezer must go to Aram, (Mesopotamia) Jacob, too, must go to the distant Aram to secure a progeny for the race; and a marriage with a woman of Canaan would have been regarded as derogatory to the honour of their race:—in short, as these races were diverse in religion, so also in the countries pertaining to them, in customs, and modes of thought; and a brotherly intimacy between them was not to be thought of.

A. I am sorry for that, especially, that at so early a period religion should have been the cause of it. Quantum religio—says Lucretius rightly.

E. This too was the fault of the Hamites. From whatever cause it happened, we see the fact clearly, that from earliest times, among the tribes descended from Ham, the most gloomy superstition and the darkest idolatry have pre-

ailed. Tradition ascribes the origin of it to Ham himself. Whether this were so or not, among his posterity the obscure tendency to a dark or indeed horrible religion is undeniable. Think of the Egyptians, Phenicians, Carthaginians, the most cultivated nations belonging to this race ; how gloomy, and horrid were their religious rites ! and among other African tribes, the most miserable fetisch worship has come from the same source. Glance now for a moment at the language and religion of the Shemites (for, as to the ground forms, all these tribes from the Euphrates to the Red Sea have but one language), how pure and simple is their religion ! how entirely abstracted, and purified from all sensuousness, is their name of God ! how characteristick of humanity their notions of man and of his duties ! It is as if one had passed from the hut of the slave into the open and free tent of the children and the friends of God. For consider, it is these same tribes of Shem, the Arabians included, to whom the world is indebted for the doctrine of the unity of God, and the purest ideas of religion, and of creation, and who have maintained and diffused these with a zeal, which they have considered the highest honour of the race. The Hamites on the other hand went before them in that, which we now call culture ; they founded kingdoms, and systems of policy, prosecuted trade, and built cities. Most of the Shemites for a long period remained herdsmen, or if they entered into other modes of life, continued in a state of great simplicity ; and you see how favourable this circumstance was for the language and traditions of the primeval world, which they transmitted. They were not rendered artificially complex, nor over-borne and corrupted ; but in their simplicity and separation, like the tent, they remained in the tent a sacred legacy of patriarchal origin.

A. 'There you come again upon a new difficulty. How is it possible, that such ancient traditions and narratives, among a people so little cultivated, and with their roving

manner of life, could be so long preserved, and transmitted even for thousands of years, in a manner to deserve the least credence? My doubts on that point, I confess, are not easily satisfied.

E. We will begin to unravel the knot at the end, viz. with the history of Joseph. This must of course, it seems to me, be preserved by the race, because it was founded upon, and served to explain, an important fact, the transplanting of the whole nation to Egypt. So long as an Israelite lived in Egypt, Joseph could not be forgotten, if not from thankfulness and love, yet from the trouble and oppression, which they suffered there. Thus this history might and must come down to Moses, even supposing that it was not previously written. Then too, it has such an air of authenticity, and is so full of Egypt!

A. That is true. It gives us authentick accounts of Egypt to a certain extent from a very ancient period, although it is conceived in a style very characteristick of the Israelites.

E. Because it was conceived and related by Israelites, and not by Egyptians, a sufficient pledge that such would be the case. With this, too, is inseparably connected the history of Jacob; and this, united with the history of Joseph, forms the most full and extended of all the traditions,* partly, because the events related in it were more recent and nearer to the compiler, and partly, because through the medium of twelve sons and their posterity many particulars of it would naturally be preserved. There are distinct traditions in it undeniably, but not a two-fold tradition of the same event, as in more ancient traditions. Every thing, as far as the nature of the case would permit, is proved by circumstances of name, place, monuments, genealogical registers, and since those of neighbouring tribes are industriously and at large inserted among

the registers of this,* they serve to authenticate its history. These registers are the historical archives of the Orientals, and the historical traditions are the commentary. In the history of Jacob, too, the account of his wanderings, of his children, and his wives, is so in accordance with the life of a herdsmen, with the relations of a household, and the character of woman.

A. But beyond this, the antecedent traditions ?

E. Are more barren and scanty, as they must be. In the account of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt we recognize a two-fold tradition†. But here, too, every thing remains so true to the matter, so suited to time and place, that each tradition may generally be distinguished. Observe for example the reflection of the Arabian desert in the story of Ishmael‡. We see, too, from what has been remarked, why the accounts given of the blessings pronounced, and of the marriages, are so minute and full, since from these proceeds, as it were, the genealogical tree, on which afterwards every thing else is arranged.

A. But the reference to Canaan is every where observable.

E. It must be so, because Canaan was the end of all Abraham's sojournings, the sum of all the promises, and the theatre of all the events of the history. Places and families were the witnesses of particular events, and the long life of the patriarchs furnished a security for the preservation of the whole history. The race was shut up by itself, enjoyed a quiet mode of life, and the patriarchal traditions, together with the blessings pronounced, and the promises, formed as it were the soul, and the intellectual nourishment of it. A war-like people have their war-songs, a race of herdsmen their pastoral traditions.

A. And farther back, beyond the age of Abraham ?

E. The history vanishes even back to the deluge. A

* Gen. xxxvi.

† Gen. xii. 20. 16. 21.

‡ Gen. xvi. 21.

naked genealogical table is all that we have*. And observe even the poverty of the accounts for this period are a pledge of their truth. At this time the various races were making their migrations, and moving hither and thither. They must acquire consistence, and become established, before we could hear any thing more from them. Thus from Abraham to Noah, we have only a catalogue of names for the whole interval; yet important names, because they are the genealogy of these Eastern nations.

A. If they were only authenticated, as we could wish!

E. You must authenticate them for yourself, and the relations of the parts and members, of the different races, and of the regions of country to which they belonged, furnish the means of doing so very satisfactorily. Of the progeny of Japheth the number given is small; two generations only.† And the race is left there as a terra incognita, beyond the mountains. The posterity of Ham recorded are more numerous,‡ but the notices of them, which are definite, extend only to the region of country, which lay in the sphere of these traditions, between the Euphrates and Egypt; the other names are attached to these only as a terra incognita. In regard to these, too, the more full and distinct notices are always connected with some definite occasion and saying, from which they proceed, as for example, the account of Nimrod and of the Canaanites.¶ The register of the children of Shem shows this still more clearly. Heber's line is traced downward in both Peleg and Joktan,§ and their children, while of Aram only one generation is given,¶ and the other brothers are passed by and forgotten, because they were too far removed, and no notices were found of them, as of those more nearly related. The relation then of the members in this genealogical register furnishes evidence of its truth.

* Gen. x. xi.

† Gen. x. 2. 4.

‡ Gen. x. 6—14.

¶ Gen. x. 9—12. 14—19. § Gen. x. 24—29. xi. 10—29. ¶ Gen. x. 23.

A. Do you not believe, then, that Moses drew this chart ?

E. How could he ? It is in fact, properly speaking, no chart ; but, as it was before called, a register. If he had contrived it, it would have had no authority, and from the relation of the parts it is moreover plain, from what age and what region it was transmitted.

A. From what one then ? I am anxious to know.

E. From about the time of Peleg, and the region, which he inhabited. In his time the tribes made their migrations ; and as these migrations would be the subject of discourse, or it would be inquired, in how many distinct branches an original race had gone forth, this seems to have been the origin of these genealogical charts. Hence so little is said of the oldest sons of Japheth and Shem ; and hence the traditions are chiefly confined to a small region between the Nile and the Euphrates or the Tigris. There were the enterprises of Nimrod, there wandered the generation of Peleg and Joktan, there Aram established himself, thence the Canaanites went forth, and this, too, gives its limits to this genealogical record.

A. And had Moses then nothing to do in the construction of it ?

E. He made the genealogical record, which he found existing, as far as he could perhaps, into a geographical chart, i. e. he added to it an account of the place and direction, to which these ancient family divisions of the successive generations of the world had directed their course according to ancient tradition. Of Japheth he knew nothing more definite, and placed his descendants (v. 5.) by a very general designation in the obscure regions of the unexplored North. In regard to Nimrod, Ashur, and the Canaanites, (v. 8—12. 18. 19.) he added the geographical accounts, which he had received ; but most respecting the Canaanites, because they were the nearest. Yet particular geographical notices occur of both earlier and later origin apparently, than the time of

Moses. Of the children of Joktan he gave but a brief notice,* because, not to mention other descendants of Shem, these were unknown to him. The very poverty you perceive of this chart, and of these notices, is their security from being lost or interpolated.

A. It seems to me, too, that much useless trouble has been taken from considering this chapter, even in respect to names, a proper and complete chart of the emigrations, of ancient tribes, and seeking to trace out every name as a country or city.

E. So it appears to me, though labour bestowed in this way is praise-worthy, if it is not wholly in a wrong direction. But who can assure us, that some of these several races, that then went forth separately from each other, were not soon lost and absorbed or united with others, and who can tell whether all the names of families must be found in the countries which they inhabited? Even Moses, or perhaps an earlier patriarch, knew of the dwellings of Japheth, nay, of Shem and Joktan themselves, only the little, which occurs here, (v. 5. 22. 30.) and must we know more than they? Other divisions and cities again are described, with a particularity common in ancient descriptions of countries, as if a small tract were the whole world. (v. 10. 11. 19. 26—29.) How do we learn now, that accounts were preserved of the towns and cities of all these, that, for example, all the sons of Joktan, (v. 26—29) built for themselves cities in the region named. (v. 30.) The ground of all these errors is, that the chapter is taken as a proper map or chart, and as one made, by Moses; while it was originally a mere register of the different branches of families in their first separation from each other, and of their earliest offspring. The later glosses upon this too, which for us however are very ancient, only designate, somewhat vaguely for the most part, their possessions and

* Gen. x. 30.

dwelling-places, and without affirming whether every name remained, and continued in the successive generations. In the mean time it is enough for our purpose, that the register proceeds, with chronological notices and ages of individuals, in a way distinct from the accounts of any other people, even back to the deluge.

A. And so you consider the journal of what took place in the ark as true and authentick ?

E. I know not otherwise how it attained its present form, and gave the measurement of the water in the daily increase and decrease of its height above the mountains. Every thing is noticed as in the actual and near view of the thing itself. Its tone, too, and the fragmentary character of these notices, before, during, and after the flood, are proof of its high antiquity.

A. And was the deluge as universal, as the author of this supposed ?

E. In relation to our purpose it would make no difference if we admit that it was not universal. It is sufficient, that this author held it to be so, and knew no country, that had escaped its overwhelming waters. Suppose that in the farthest East, high mountains and behind them whole kingdoms were saved from the flood ; he knew it not, and was not bound to know it. The giants, his persecutors, and with them all that lived in South Eastern Asia must perish, while he took with him his household and a stock of animals to a more Western region, from which through him the earth would now begin again to be peopled. If there were a people in the extreme East saved from the deluge we shall in due time find it out.

A. But how ? and by what means ?

E. By a comparison of their languages, their institutions, and most ancient traditions, with that which has spread abroad from mount Ararat. It is generally thought so long a period

can admit only of conjectures, but I hope they will not always continue so.

A. And the history before the deluge ?

E. Passes obviously into a mere record of significant names, genealogical records, and family traditions mingled together ; and here, too, its poverty is a pledge of its truth. The voice of tradition would tell only what was known, and restrained itself to this scanty memorial ;—a barren pedigree ; and the significant names in it are the sole bridge of communication between that ancient world and our own.

A. You speak of significant names.

E. Every name includes in it the whole history of a patriarch. Look at this a moment, and begin with Adam. He is called a man of earth, and that is his history. He was formed from the earth, appointed for the cultivation of the earth, and was returned to earth ; and we know of him nothing further. Abel, a man of sorrow, or who was the occasion of sorrow, gives the history of another. Cain, the first possession ; and the name of his son Epoch also is equally significant. Noah, under whom, or in whose time, the earth was to find rest from the oppression of tyrants ; and so of others.

A. But these could not have been the names, which the persons bore in their life time, for all who gave names to their children were not prophets in regard to their future history. Did Eve know the future fate of Abel, when she gave him his name ?

E. That I do not suppose ; in some cases however the name would afterwards be interpreted in a sense different from that in which it was given. Thus in the example of Cain and Noah. Others suffered perhaps, when the traditions were formed respecting them ; a modification of form, as we find customary in later traditions. Recollect the case of Abram and Abraham, of Sarai and Sarah, of Esau and Edom, Jacob and Israel, &c. The man either assumed from later events in his life a new name, or slightly modified his former

one so as to make it characteristick of his life. In some names this would seem to me to have been very easy, as the kindred forms which proceed from the original root, like branches from the trunk, would sufficiently show. Enoch, the son of Cain, bore his name, indicating initiation, in a different sense from the initiated son of Seth. Cain, Methuselah, and others may be interpreted in different ways ; but for our purpose it is of no consequence. Whether all parents, who gave names to their children before the flood, were prophets or not, the names of their children are significant names. With many of them, as also after the flood with the names of Shem, Japheth, and Ham, was associated the history of their lives, and even of the race, of which they were the origin. From these proper names, therefore, the earliest history proceeded ; on names was it dependent, and by these it was preserved. The general customs of the Orientals, together with their genealogical records, prove this beyond a question.

A. But where the history of the life was not conveyed by the name ?

E. There it was attached to it by a song, a tradition. You see an example of this in the sword of Lamech, and the translation of Enoch. Of the children of Cain no names were preserved, but the race of the inventor and artificer, and so this single well-connected family line leads back to the highest antiquity.

A. We ought then to have these names still in the original language.

E. That seems to me of little importance. Were it another language, and the names translated, as for example the name of Moses, so much the better, since thus the names would become truly significant, and their meaning be explained.

A. But in this you at least carry back the invention of the alphabet to a very high antiquity. For otherwise, the preservation of such names in pedigrees would be scarcely possible.

E. At first, perhaps, only the numbers which exhibit the

ages of the successive generations, were given with some mark to designate the meaning of the name in each, and with this mark would be retained the significant name, and consequently the history of the man. So do all sensuous tribes even now ; and, without a designation of things, mere names in connexion with the lines and numbers could scarcely be written or preserved at all. With the name of Abel was connected perhaps some representation of a man slain, with that of Enoch the picture of a city, &c. This must be the method of proceeding, where there was no alphabet ; but my own belief is, that the alphabet existed at a very early date ; and by this very mode of recording names and registers it would necessarily be soon invented.

A. Soon ? do you say. It is generally considered the latest and most difficult invention.

E. It would be as difficult after three thousand years, as in the first thousand, indeed more difficult. If picture and hieroglyphick writing has once become established, and so far in use, as to serve the most necessary purposes, no alphabetick writing, pretty surely, is ever likely to be thought of, as the example of the Egyptians and Chinese shows. Pictures might become hieroglyphicks, but these would never become letters, if they were modified, for ten thousand years in succession. From the matter which the painter seeks to represent by a picture we could never come at the articulation of a sound, but rather, the more our attention is fixed upon that, the farther we are from this ; and the probability is, that alphabetick writing must have been invented very early, or it never would have existed.

A. The common opinion is quite the contrary of that.

E. The common opinion, as it seems to me, has not been formed on sufficiently clear views in regard to this point. If alphabetick writing was ever to be invented, it must be brought about by reason of something simple, something very definite, and very indispensable, which could not be expressed

by images. Now proper names exhibit these very conditions ; and it is a fact, that names and genealogical registers constitute the earliest traditions of the primeval world. In the second place, it must be found out in reference to objects, which were generally known, where a single word, or at all events, a mark attached to it, should bring the whole matter to mind, and such were significant names, where a word brought to mind the whole life of the individual named. Connected with it, in the third place, were circumstances favourable to invention and memory, such as the long lives of the patriarchs, their simplicity, their avoidance of images and symbols of the divinity, the reverence with which they were regarded by the long line of their posterity, the sublimity of the idea, under which, by means of these simple but mysterious characters, they brought the origin of the human race, and the whole original revelation of God, down to the generations, which had sprung from them. The purest, the earliest, and the most urgent necessity gave rise to the invention or it would never have taken place ; is not such your own view of it ?

A. Very nearly. Who then was the inventor of the alphabet ?

E. That I know not ; who does know ? The traditions of several different nations call him Seth, Thet, Theut, Thoit, all one and the same name. Perhaps it was he, who, according to the import of his own significant name, set up a monument, for alphabetick writing was in truth an everlasting monument. Nor was the invention so difficult, when a man had once fallen upon the track. He analyzed, we may suppose, the sound of the voice in uttering some of the names, which were to be placed upon the genealogical table, and which could not be represented there by significant images, and, this done, the invention was accomplished. Children and grand-children were assembled to learn these monuments, especially on religious festivals, for these memorials of their

fathers were connected with their religious notions and feelings. They learned the names of their fathers combined with these characters, which represented sounds, and so the invention would be rendered fixed, and permanent, as far as any thing could be so. Thus the fifth chapter of Genesis may have been, with its names and numbers, the first tablet of thought in articulate sounds, and transmitted perhaps through Noah, to Shem, as the meaning of the latter name might denote.

A. And the earlier traditions ?

E. They were transmitted probably in pictured images, or by mere oral tradition, until alphabetic writing was more fully established in use. The history of the creation is entirely a sensuous representation arranged by days' works and numbers ; in seven pictures of the separate portions of the created universe ; and, placed with reference to their parallel or corresponding relations, they could be preserved and acknowledged, because the institution of the sabbath renewed and retained them in the recollection. But by this the way was only prepared for hieroglyphick writing. The case was similar with the history of Paradise. When the tree, the woman, and the serpent were painted, there were marks enough to aid and direct the memory; in regard to the cause and manner of what had taken place, and the matter itself; the removal from Eden, the altered mode of life, was retained alas ! not by the memory merely, but, in deed, and in the reality itself. Do you see in this narrative itself of the primeval world no traces of this mode of preserving the record of events ?

A. I would be very glad if I could, for without that the whole is merely speculative opinion.

E. In the time of Enos, men began to call on the name of Jehovah ; and this, under whatever form of words it may be expressed, presupposes some kind of confession and worship at a publick religious monument. For that reference is

had here to the sons of God, who went in to the daughters of men, is an explanation, that cannot be sustained. Those are called sons of the Elohim, occur in a fragment of a heroick tradition, and are obviously designated heroes, mighty men, as they were clearly shown to be. Here men called themselves by the name of Jehovah, i. e. professed themselves his worshippers ; and we might naturally conjecture this to be the time, when Seth set up such a memorial, as was before spoken of, of the name and word of God, and that the ancient fables of the pillars of Seth were perhaps derived from this. Yet the whole is, and must continue, mere conjecture ; and if we suppose the invention of writing to have been of later date, it is sufficient, that it was made in the family of Seth or of Shem. All the Eastern nations, which have monosyllabick languages, know only hieroglyphicks. A single alphabet alone exists in the world, and the names of the letters in this, even as the Greeks afterwards obtained them through the Phenicians, are obviously Chaldaean, i. e. in the Shemitish language. The Phenicians had not invented it, for as was remarked, they had probably received their language itself from the Shemites, as they lived in the midst of them, and the rest of the descendants of Ham had no alphabetick characters. Even the Egyptians had only hieroglyphicks ; when they received an alphabet, it had what according to common prejudice were the Phenician characters.

A. You do not then, I suppose, consider the story of the tree of knowledge, and the picture of creation, to be of Egyptian origin, formed in some way from hieroglyphick representations, and discovered by Moses ?

E. What is there in these, my friend, that is Egyptian ? or that even resembles the Egyptian hieroglyphicks ? Every thing, which aimed to set forth this history in monuments of art, was ridiculous, and has been ridiculed with good reason as more recent and spurious. And on what is the opinion, to which you refer grounded ? Where are those hieroglyph-

icks to be found, from which Moses formed his account? Where is there any thing like this history in Egyptian mythology and language? That certain conceptions of night, of spirits, of light and æther, with certain Egyptian gods, are met with is nothing to the purpose, for Mizraim too had his conceptions of the primeval world, as handed down from the patriarchs, and from Noah. But how darkly, and gloomily, are they Egyptianized in this mythology. I would be glad to find the Ezra, who from the mud of the Egyptian Nile could draw out and kindle in its purity the holy fire of the first ideas of creation; and the Jeremiah, who could carry it thither and conceal it in that dark and obscure mass. In the languages of the posterity of Shem, which we commonly call Oriental, every thing is clear and strikes the eye at once. The radical principles, the fundamental conceptions, the parallelism of the heavens, and the earth, of God and man, of the inanimate and animate creation, are placed and arranged in accordance with the forms of these languages. Can there be a more decisive proof than this? the formation of a whole class of languages in respect to the sensuous images expressed in the radical forms, and in a style so peculiar. Recollect moreover from what regions these traditions are obviously derived. Paradise, the tree of life, the Cherubim, the deluge—whither does the collector of them himself refer these? Observe the constant progress of culture from East to West, from the Ganges to Ararat, the migration of tribes from the mountain elevations of Asia into the low countries, and finally, at a late period, into Egypt, growing in part out of the mud of the Nile; how natural is this course, and how correspondent is every thing to the history of the earth, and of the human race! Eastwards, in the vicinity of the most elevated regions of Asia, are still found probably the most ancient mythologies, languages, and social organizations of society. There we find still a large class of entirely monosyllabick languages, (for all children speak at first in mona-

syllables) and, what is remarkable, these nations still depend on hieroglyphicks, know no alphabet, and have still their ancient political organization, which arose obviously out of the absolute despotism of paternal authority, preserved through thousands of years, as if for a perpetual memorial of the infancy of the world. If we shall ever learn more thoroughly the mythologies and languages of these countries, we shall see in a clearer light many things pertaining to the original history of our race, and the derivation of the earliest ideas. So much, however, we see with the greatest clearness, that Egypt could by no possibility be the source of these traditions. They came down from the high regions of Asia, and were spread abroad with the diffusion of the Shemitish race. At length Canaan became the spot for their preservation, and all the circumstances of the nation were so ordered, that they could be preserved in their purity.

A. You do not, then, hold the Hebrew language to be the most ancient that has existed, the language of Paradise, the mother of all the languages of the earth.

E. How could it be, at least in its present state? Its radicals are all regular, and of two syllables, and, in its essential features, it is a highly cultivated language. Men who lived a thousand years, must have had a different organization, different organs, consequently also a different language. Lower Asia, where these nations dwelt, (not Cashmire and the upper Ganges,) is obviously the climate for this language. Yet, I hold it to be a daughter of the primeval language, and indeed one of the oldest. The regularity of its radical forms even is no valid objection to this opinion. This fact, indeed, arose from the early use of alphabetick writing; for it is proved from the history of all languages and nations, that "alphabetick characters and writing have universally given regularity to languages, but where hieroglyphicks are used they remain in perpetual infancy and unintelligible barbarism."

A. You give me a clearer general view of this matter,

than I have ever before had. The more one seeks to find all things in each, the less does he find any thing satisfactorily. I will accustom myself to refer back this echo of the primeval times to the simplicity of its origin, and to expect, and hear no more from it, than from the nature of the case, it can say. But must not much, that is given here, be the mere poetical fiction of late times, the tower of Babel, for example, the history of the desolation of Sodom, Jacob's wrestling with the angel, &c.? In regard to the first, you have shown me, that it is a satirical effusion respecting the absurd enterprizes of the first ambitious tyrant. Probably many things occurred during the building, that produced dissensions, and they therefore abandoned the work, and separated from each other. As soon as some of them went away, others followed, as in the melting of snow, the current formed by one mass carries off another. It happened here, as in the migrations near the commencement of the christian era, and this was only the first general migration of the sort. It came too, from the very same region, from which all great migrations have since come, from Tartary, in every age, the fruitful mother of nations. The history of the destruction of Sodom is probably a later poetical dress, with which some Hebrew has clothed facts of history, as the pillar of salt, probably a more recent memorial, may show. And finally the wrestling of Jacob with the angel, even as you explain it, is perhaps nothing more than a poetical description of his earnest wrestling in prayer, with God, that he would protect him from the assault of Esau. We find this prayer related before, and the nocturnal struggle was perhaps the mere fiction of another tradition, which had the name of Elohim, and related every thing in a poetical dress. The Hebrew prophet, who has introduced it, has indeed so understood it. "He strove with the angel and prevailed, for he wept and entreated him." Bodily conflict is not very successfully conducted by weeping and entreaty. Many other poetical em-

bellishments might be named, which we, in the simplicity of our hearts, receive as true history.

E. It would amount to nothing, if the whole were so understood. But your interpretation does not satisfy me. The diversity of languages in the world is a problem, that cannot be explained from the quiet migrations of the various tribes, even when we add to this, climate, face of the country, mode of life, and customs of different races, as productive causes of it. Nations often dwell in close contact, of the same race, i. e. of the same organick formation, but with languages the most diverse. An island, a small continent, embraces often within a narrow space, many such ; and the smallest and most savage tribes abound most in the diversities of language. If we shall ever have a list of all nations, so as to compare them together in respect to the three leading titles, which belong here, their formation, languages, and the mythological stores of the different races, we shall be able to judge of these things more conclusively. So far as I now know, we cannot explain every thing by our conceptions of the migratory movements of the race. That which needs explanation here is not diversities, i. e. dialectical variations of one language, from different degrees of copiousness, and causes of gradual change, but total diversity, confusion, Babel. Something positive must have preceded, which placed men's heads so at variance with each other. Philosophical explanations are not enough, and give no satisfaction. I assume a miraculous event to explain what is related in this tradition, because I can give no natural explanation of it. So it is also with the destruction of Sodom. You have here rather strong features of poetical embellishment, as for example,

The sun was risen upon the earth,
 When Lot was come to Zoar.
 Then rained Jehovah, upon Sodom and Gomorrah,
 Brimstone and fire from Jehovah, out of heaven.
 He overthrew the cities there,

And all the plain was desolate,
 And all that dwelt in them, and all that grew.
 And when Lot's wife looked back behind her,
 She became a monument of salt :—

that is, she was consumed, and became, even in her form, a monument of destruction, of which in the East, salt was always a standing monument. It may be, that afterwards, upon the place where she died, a monument of bituminous fragments was thrown together, as is customary in the East, and that the expression, pillar of salt, came to be applied to it. Thus this expression, like the repetition of the name Jehovah, who caused it to rain, and again, from whom it rained, appears as a very natural emphasis in the mode of speaking, as every tradition adheres closely and with emphasis to its subject. The perplexing riddles, that have been made out of both these, are unnecessary, or rise from the love of the marvellous. Finally the story of Jacob's wrestling with the angel is related entirely in the tone of historical narrative. It is something in addition to the prayer, and coming after it, not as a paraphrase merely,—but I believe we have said enough of this.

A. You find, therefore, nothing that is properly poetry in these traditions ?

E. As you understand the word poetry, there is but a single poem here, Lamech's on the invention of the sword. (for this, according to the context, and sound interpretation, is the import of it, not an unfeeling expression of joy at the murder of Cain.) It has a metrical relation of members, and even correspondencies of sound. The parallelism occurs in it, and you thus perceive how ancient this is. Lyrick poetry and musick are invented in the same age, and in one and the same family. The former was the daughter of the latter, and they have always been united. In short, here is this brief triumphal song ; but I can only give it without correspondencies of sound, without rhyme,

Ye wives of Lamech, hear my voice,
 And hearken to my speech.
 I slew a man, who wounded me,
 A youth, who smote me with a blow.
 If Cain shall be seven times avenged,
 Then Lamech, seventy times seven.

He felt thus forcibly the superior efficacy of iron and of the sword, against the onset of other deadly weapons. Other songs, and properly poetical effusions, are not found in these traditions ; but much of the spirit of poetry in the narrative, in respect to every thing, especially in concise thoughts and moral sentiments. In regard to the concise, measured, and majestick form of its contents, the picture of the creation is sublime poetry, though not fitted for musick, or in the form of verse. The blessings pronounced by the patriarchs are all a lofty *mashal*, in concise expressions full of parallelism, though again not designed for musick. The whole narrative description is now pastoral, and now heroick in its own way, but every where characterized by simplicity of expression. The matter of it, and the tone and spirit of the whole, became the basis of the subsequent poetry and history of the race, as the traditions of their fathers do among all nations. In short, my friend, we are now through the entrance way, and shall hereafter survey the building itself.

A. You must allow me yet one question. Have you arrived to any certain conclusion in regard to those hypotheses, which explain the diversity of these traditions in the use of the words Jehovah and Elohim ?

E. The diversity, especially in the most ancient pieces, is obvious to the eye, and has been traced out by a recent author* with an accuracy, which leaves little to be added ; unless indeed an aim at too great precision is injurious to the hypothesis itself. Passages are separated by it throughout, which obviously belong together, and are probably from the

* Eichhorns Einleitung ins A. T. Th. 2. S. 301—383.

same age, perhaps even from the same hand. Regard was probably had to the question, where Elohim, and where Jehovah were placed. The most ancient fragments had Elohim, and also those, in which the most ancient fragments were followed as the guide, or something was related, that was not properly suited to the dignity of Jehovah. Other fragments, taken perhaps from the mouth of tradition at a later period, have Jehovah throughout; yet in those too, this name was probably often inserted by the compiler. In matters of this kind, we can never arrive at the highest certainty, and in regard to all the traditions, with this or with that name, their origin from one source, the traditions of the family of Shem, cannot fail to be recognized.

THE VOICE OF ANTIQUITY.

Whence art thou, hallowed voice of ancient ages?

And whither bound?

And how, amid the storm of times and nature's changes,

Hath breathed thy gentle breath?

Com'st thou from life's fair tree and holy fountain,

In Eden's groves?

That of creation, and the deep prophetick feeling,

Of man's pure primeval love,

Of that forbidden tree, the cares and sorrows,

Of man deceived,

Of floods, and giants, impious men, that braved the heavens,

Thou speak'st in artless tones?

Say, how didst thou avoid the sweeping billows,

That drown'd the world?

And gentle as thou art, escape the wild dispersion

Of nations o'er the earth?

Did, then, thy father hide thee from the tempest

In Paradise?

And send thee, with the dove, and leaf of peaceful olive,

To his new chosen son?

Yes, daughter of the voice divine and human,
Thou went'st with him,
(His pledge, his legacy, received from holy fathers,)
Within his floating ark.

And thou didst cleave through every generation,
To worthiest names,
Descending safe, by God's own holy name protected,
Till we are blessed by thee.

Ye broken echoes, and memorial fragments,
Of earliest times,
To me how dear ! for letters, and a pure religion,
The world received from thee.

MOSES.

Our distance from each other, my friend, shall not prevent us from considering the character of that great man, who not only founded the political, the religious, and social institutions of the Hebrews, but more fully confirmed the use, and animated the genius, of their poetry. We have now passed through the entrance court of the temple, and, in the fundamental conceptions of their poetry and religion, as well as in the cosmology and most ancient historical notices of this people, have collected, out of the patriarchal traditions, materials, to which we shall hereafter have frequent occasion to refer. Now, the whole scene will be changed ; and we shall no longer find ourselves concerned with a shepherd race, and with pastoral conceptions of God, and of the sphere of human life. A man born and educated in Egypt, but who made Arabia his adopted country, the theatre of his plans, of his deeds, his wanderings, and his miracles, is now before us. From him, too, and the events of his history, even the poetry of his people derives its spirit, its form, and its development.

Let me approach thee nearer, thou serious, sacred shade ! In thee do I contemplate one among the greatest, and most ancient of those mighty men, who were the law-givers and benefactors of the human race ! Let not the brightness of thy countenance shine upon me, as once it shone, but so that I may know the features thereof, and show them to my friend, with that pure light and truth, which thou didst place, as a sacred symbol, upon the breast of the high priest of thy people.

The early events in the life of Moses were of that remarkable kind, which in later periods of antiquity we find, either as history, or fable, in the early lives of many law-givers and distinguished men. A Cyrus, a Romulus, and others, were delivered as he was, and his name reminded him, that the

Divine Being had not without design delivered him from a watery grave, by means of the daughter of the king of that people, which was oppressing his own. In this, as in other instances, it might seem, as though Providence delighted in bringing forth from nothingness the most important products of wisdom and power, by a thread the most slender, and the most complicated in its windings, and even to employ the hand of those, who are hostile to its design, for the accomplishment of its deep and mysterious counsels.

Moses was brought up at the court of Pharaoh. Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he was also acquainted with the secret knowledge of the priests, and the political organization of that country, which became the cradle of the political institutions of various other nations. Tradition represents him also as a military leader and hero, but on this point the history of his own nation is silent.

It is no valid objection to the wisdom of Providence, that it carries forward its work by instruments, and attains its divine purposes by human means. The purpose here to be accomplished was to reform ; and, as far as it could be done consistently with other purposes, to bring back to the customs, and to the God of their fathers, a people who had lost these customs in Egypt, and to whom, from their near connexion with the idolatrous worship and priestly domination of the Egyptians, the God of their fathers was no longer familiar. To do this, and restore them from the undisciplined and wandering state, into which their minds had fallen, an Egyptian guide and teacher was necessary ; who might employ those very institutions, to which they had become accustomed in Egypt, in order to restore to them the religion of their fathers, in the form best fitted to their present capacity for understanding and receiving it. Here again, the skill and qualifications of such a leader were necessary, in order to make a lasting impression, and employ even their senses and existing habits for the attainment of the end ; in short, to construct

for them, as Moses did, out of the costume and external accompaniments of idolatry, among a superstitious people, a form of religious worship, and organize a ritual, which, in spite of all that was sensuous and typical in it, was the first political sanctuary of true knowledge on earth. It is idle to pretend to deny, that Moses, in the organization of the priesthood, and the arrangements of the temple and the ritual, had no reference to those Egyptian institutions, in which he was himself educated, and from which he aimed forever to reform and separate his people ; the traces of resemblance are too obvious to be mistaken. That such was the case is sufficiently shown, by the fact, that he built every thing upon the priesthood, and chose and set apart a particular tribe for this office, by the offerings, the purifications, the dress, and the breast-plate of the high-priest, and by many individual rites, which, however, it would be too tedious to enumerate here and compare with those of Egypt. Yet, the spirit of his religion was as obviously not Egyptian. The God, which he taught his people to worship, was Jehovah, the God of his fathers ; and even in forming his ceremonial out of the elements of the Egyptian he employed those only as the creative spirit employs the gross matter, to which it imparts a new organization and life. Wherever any thing bore the impress of superstition, and had only a distant tendency to idolatry, his course was directly opposed to the dark spirit of the slavish and enslaved Egypt. His people were taught to abhor all idolatrous images. The golden calf copied from models of Egyptian art and wisdom, he burned with fire, and in his indignation and zeal, gave it in the ashes, for drink, to the guilty apostates. His temple neither contained nor would admit any outward figure, or representation of God. The Cherubim even he adopted not as Egyptian Sphinxes, but as the marvellous beings, full of meaning and of terror, which were referred to in the traditions of his fathers. His high-priest bore upon his forehead, and his breast, neither hiero-

glyphicks nor idolatrous images, but letters and a sacred inscription. Through light and righteousness, i. e. the illumination of truth, he consecrated him and the twelve tribes of his people to God. The sanctuary, which he gave them, was a temple mysteriously veiled, and adorned with Oriental magnificence, as the palace of the invisible King, of whom no representation dare be formed, whose servants were the priests, and the host of Israel his moving but chosen residence. In regard to offerings and purifications he avoided entirely the superstitions of the Egyptians, and in the choice of food, placed the customs of his people in opposition to those of Egypt, which abounded in amphibious animals, and others of such kinds as were forbidden by Moses to the Israelites. His system of laws is the most ancient model, which we have, at least in a written form, where health, morals, political organization, and the service of God, are all combined in one work and one system.

It is not, however, to be denied, that this whole system was a temporary Egyptian yoke, indispensable indeed to the Israelites of that day, and generally, as being in itself a great and necessary step, in the progress of political development ; but unhappy in the extreme, if, like the Egyptian and Chinese, this must have been in its purpose and result a perpetual yoke, and an unceasing restraint upon the advancement of mankind. This, plainly, was not the purpose of Moses, nor was this his meaning, though he so often called it a perpetual covenant, and must thus impress it upon his barbarous and stiff-necked people, as Lycurgus did his laws. For he promised his people, in his last discourses to them, prophets sent from God, wise and enlightened men, as he was ; he himself improved his own laws, and modified them according to circumstances ; and declared finally the great principle, that not the slavish fear and servile worship practised by the Egyptians, but to love God with all the heart, is the word which abides in the heart, and is the greatest of all the commandments.

His severe punishments were all of them only such as resulted from the sad necessity of the times and of the people. In his last heartfelt discourse, and always indeed, he reminded them of the fatherly kindness and beneficence of God, and placed the curse and the blessing, the harsh servitude of the slave, and the voluntary and affectionate obedience of the child in contrast with each other. His God is long-suffering and abundant in goodness. It is only after long endurance in sparing the offender, and then but for a short space, that he becomes a jealous and avenging God, till his hand is again free to do good and bestow his blessings. What, then, would have been the conduct of that god-like man, had he appeared in those times, when his commands were made a snare to catch the souls of men, and hold them in a state of perpetual child-hood? in times, when his system of laws, once living in all its members, had become a lifeless mass, when the least of his precepts had been converted into a golden calf, round which men danced and revelled in the extravagance of a hypocritical idolatry? With thousand-fold reasons might he have ground it to powder, and given it, as a cup of abomination, to his sacrilegious and idolatrous people.

But I return to the history of his life. A deed of youthful heroism drove the future deliverer of his people out of Egypt, for Egypt was no longer necessary to him, and the time for deliverance was not yet come. The deserts of Arabia must become the quiet residence of his riper manhood, and tribes which were kindred to the Israelites in language and origin, were now his neighbours for forty years. Fabulous accounts have represented the Arabian Emir or Sheik, Jethro, as the instigator of Moses, and the author of his political plans; but, if the history has any truth, nothing could be more directly contradictory to the view which it gives. Jethro was indeed a man of prudence and skill, but not of such a spirit, as that, which impelled Moses to undertake a task so difficult, and to human eyes so incomprehensible in its results;

for that he was urgently impelled to undertake it, we see in the fact, that his mission was to him unexpected, was unpremeditated, and in his view, incapable of being accomplished. What a self-commending and heroick picture is this simple tranquil history of the mission of Moses, of his deeds in Egypt, of his leading out the Israelites, of his miracles, and wanderings. With no pretence, and no demands upon our admiration, in his faults and weaknesses even, it places before us a man, who never speaks of himself, is never praised, and lives only in his work, in his plans, in his laborious cares, and heroick deeds.

The appearing of God in a flaming bush is entirely Arabian in its character, as the signs and wonders, which he wrought by his hand, are wholly Egyptian. That desert, which is wholly fire, and rock, as it were, exhibits the scenery and the objects, by means of which the presence of the Eternal drew his attention, and was made manifest to him. The miracles, which his hand was empowered to work, were the weapons with which he contended against the magicians and wonder-workers of Egypt. They are of a kind, too, appropriate to Egypt, as are all the plagues, by which he delivers his people from bondage. Serpents, insects, the Nile, filthy and noxious amphibious reptiles, darkness, the destroying angel, here, as it were, represent Egypt, in regard both to its productions and its geographical character.

God led his people out of Egypt with a high hand, and an outstretched arm. He bought his servant for himself out of slavery, and baptized him, as it were, in the waves of the Red Sea, that he might be for him a purchased and a bond servant. The first-born is his also, for he was once delivered, spared, and a perpetual festival of the passover, with the blood of a slaughtered lamb upon the door, must indicate this claim of God, on every house and every generation. On the farther shore of the Red Sea, in sight of the perished hosts of their enemies, was sung in two-fold chorus the triumph-

al song of Moses and Miriam, which afterwards was the pattern of so many psalms and songs of deliverance among this people.

As on eagle's wings God bore onward his redeemed people. A barren desert must become the house for their education and discipline, where he himself supplies them with food and drink, as his first-born, and the special object of his care. These proofs of his goodness were, in subsequent periods, the perpetual theme of their national songs and festival celebrations. How much happier would have been the events of their history, had they also conformed themselves entirely to the purpose, for which their heavenly father separated them from all other nations in a desert, where they subsisted by the supplies which his indulgent hand provided, and fully imbibed the spirit of those laws and customs, by which he was to form them to a people for himself.

In the midst of a wilderness fearfully desolate the law was given with circumstances of fearful magnificence. With awe-struck fear and shuddering was established that covenant, which was to be enforced so often by fearful punishment, by fiery serpents, and the opening of the earth to swallow up the disobedient. Where now was the mild and friendly aspect of the God of Abraham, and of his shepherd sons? Where now was the form, under which he spake with the father of this people, as friend with friend, wrestled with Israel, and blessed him as a youth in his dreaming tent? Where now were those days of innocence and blessedness, when the tent of the patriarchs gave entertainment to angels, and two armies of God encamped around a caravan of simple herdsmen? Now at the presence of the angels of God the mountain is in a flame; now the earth trembles and quakes before his hosts as they go forth to war! No one can fail to perceive the altered language, which now prevails in the description of this journey of the Israelites, when compared with the former patriarchal history. Its terrific tones resound through the

desert of Arabia; God is a rock; a burning and devouring fire. Before him go destructive swarms of hornets, which he sends upon the people of Canaan. He whets his glittering sword; he sends out his arrows, which are thirsty for blood. His messengers of vengeance are Seraphim, fiery serpents, which he himself sends upon his people, and ever and anon he lifts his hand to heaven and swears, I am Jehovah! there is none beside! thy God, apostate Israel, and I live forever. The most sublime poetical effusions and images in the Psalms and Prophets are taken from this journey of Moses through the desert, from his miraculous deeds, his discourses, and especially his last poetical effusion. For this production is obviously, as it were, the original prophecy, the type and pattern of all the prophets. As this is divided into cursing and blessing, paternal exhortation and warning, so are all the prophets. In the tone and movement of the poetry, also, we see a striking similarity. As this begins with an apostrophe to the heavens and the earth, so does Isaiah begin, and many other prophecies and songs, and probably the first chapter of Isaiah was placed first, and made the introduction to all the prophets, on account of its relation to the commencement of Moses. The prophets were directed by the law of Moses, and must form themselves after his example.

In a three-fold manner, therefore, Moses exerted an influence on the poetry of his whole nation, and embraced this, as he did every thing else, in the organization of the state. First, by his deeds; the going forth out of Egypt, the journey through the desert, the conquest of the country, in which God went before him and fought for Israel, were the perpetual subject of songs and poetical descriptions, of which I now name the lamentation of Habakkuk and the 68th Psalm, as perhaps the two most remarkable. This conducting of the Israelites through the desert, was referred to in after times, as the type of all God's dealings with this people, and in it they sought the images and examples to represent their wars

and victories, the blessings and punishments, which they received. The regulation of the service of the sanctuary and of the priesthood also, I reckon among those acts of Moses, by which he influenced continuously the poetry of his people. By means of this it became the poetry of the temple, excluded entirely all idols, and hymns addressed to creatures or fabulous beings, brought the name of Jehovah into connexion with the minutest duties of the citizen, as well as the family relations ; in short made the poetry of the Hebrews in all respects sacred. As Moses and Miriam had sung their song on the shores of the Red Sea, in the same spirit was every thing in after times celebrated as the work of God. As the whole political organization was of a priestly character, as every thing was founded on the offerings and the sanctuary, so poetry clothed itself in all the ornaments of the priesthood, of the temple, and of the ceremonial service ; particularly when David, the reviver of Jewish poetry, adhered much to the magnificence of the sanctuary, and in his songs employed it even in the descriptions of God. Later prophets first ventured to return to the simple covenant of God with Abraham, and, because they saw before them the abuse of offerings, the apostacy of the priests, the idolatry of the temple service, with all its pernicious consequences, to look back beyond it all, and recall to mind the father of the faithful. Especially was this done by the great Isaiah, the eagle with fiery eye, and etherial sunward motion, among the Hebrew prophets. In this also the plan of Moses had the fate of all systems and plans ; they are first elevated and expanded, then in the end contracted and narrowed down. The poetry of the Hebrews enjoyed an undeniable advantage over all other systems of national poetry, that of being a divine, a pure temple poetry. As such, however, it was abused ; the tree remained stationary and ceased to grow, for it was confined by the roof of the temple. The most sublime tones of ancient times became a meagre echo in the ears of the drowsy and idolatrous ages, that succeeded.

The second means, by which Moses acted unceasingly upon the poetry of the nation, was by the description of his own deeds ; by his own poetry and songs. His last poetical effusion, as before remarked, was the pattern of the prophets. The Israelites were required to learn it, and make it familiar to their minds ; and severe as it was upon them, they held it in high esteem. His song at the Red Sea was the model of their Psalms of praise, of triumph, and of deliverance, as the lofty Psalm ascribed to him, which is the 90th in the collection, was the beautiful model of didactic poems. In general, the poetry of Moses, like his life and character, is full of meaning, but severe, earnest, and breathing an air of solitude. It glows with brightness, as his countenance did, but a veil is spread over it. The spirit that breathes in his institutions and writings, is widely diverse from the spirit of Job, of David, and of Solomon. His own description of his institutions and journeyings belongs also to the instrumentality, of which I am speaking. That he recorded his laws, and the journey through the desert, and made the former a canon for the priests, the latter, especially the last repetition of the law, a lesson for the instruction of the people ; that he chose a particular tribe of men, who, relieved from other employments, must devote themselves to reading, copying, and carrying into effect his laws and regulations ; that he excluded all symbols, figures, and hieroglyphics, and employed writing, alphabetick writing, as well for the ornament of the high priest, as for the occupation of the priests, and thereby secured the advantage of it, for his people ; that he probably collected the ancient histories and traditions of his race, and prefixed them to his history, as sacred relicks of antiquity, even as the basis of his law, of his doctrines, and of the claim of Israel to the land of Canaan ; is proof, that he devised his plans, or intended to do so, for making a barbarian people, at least in part, and in the fundamental laws of their organization, into a literary people. The ark of his tabernacle in its alphabetick

inscriptions preserved a treasure of antiquity, and the most powerful instrument of national cultivation, down to the latest times. Were its rude tables of the law still extant, could we still find the stones, on which before his death he placed alphabetick inscriptions, we should truly possess in it the most valuable monument of the primeval world.

The third means, by which Moses even provided for the revival of sacred poetry in times of declension, was the privilege which he gave and secured to the prophets. The far-sighted man anticipated even, by this privilege, the times of the kings, as the times for its exercise, when his prescriptions should be neglected and violated. To their open abominations he opposed a voice, which should call back the people and even the kings to their proper place and duty, and guard itself from danger by the reverence yielded to Moses as the founder of the nation. Such was the voice of the watchmen, the wise men of the nation, who roused their attention, when all was sunk in sleep, who, when the priests were silent and the great tyrannical, spake in the name of Jehovah, advising, comforting, and warning. This privilege conferred by Moses has given us an Elijah and Elisha, an Isaiah and Habakkuk ; it has renewed his form and voice, at least in shadow, and in echo. The prophets are not read understandingly, when they are regarded merely as prophets, as dreamers, and criers in the place of assembly. They were, indeed, successors of Moses, applying and reviving his law in times of declension, and some of them men of great worldly wisdom, distinguished orators, and instructive poets. In Isaiah we have more, perhaps, than a republick of Plato. Finally, I do not consider Moses as the author of the sayings and prophecies of Balaam. In them breathes another, I venture even to say. a more poetical spirit, than in the poetry of Moses. Great as he was in his poetical character, Moses was rather a law-giver than a poet, and his last benedictions especially show, at least, when compared with the blessing of

Jacob, the effect of old age, and a soul tending to the grave.

He died, says the beautiful tradition of his people, at the mouth of God, and God himself buried him. He died upon a mountain summit, overlooking a land, for which he had done and suffered all that human powers could do and suffer. His eyes might behold it, but his foot not tread upon it. Even him, though firm as a rock in patience, in doing, and in suffering, had unbelief and impatience caused to waver, and therefore he came not to his place of rest, and survived not the attainment of the end, for which he journeyed. Wise and happy provision for him, that he did not survive it! Thus were preserved, unstained with the blood of the Canaanites, those hands which stretched the rod over the Red Sea, which received the law in the clouds, which built the sanctuary of God. Even in the battle with the Amalekites they were raised only in prayer.

How great is the difference, if we compare them together, between the two brothers, Moses and Aaron. The latter is the body, the former the soul. "He shall be thy mouth, and thou shalt be to him in the place of God!" So it remained always in the relations between priests and prophets. How few priests, even among a people, where they were teachers, judges, preservers of the laws of the nation, and in a sense the regal class, ever opposed themselves to the progress of corruption? Under the judges and kings did not corruption indeed always begin with them? As Aaron made the golden calf, while his brother was holding converse with God, and meditating his laws, upon Mount Sinai, so were a hundred priests the well-fed servants of Baal, while Elijah, the successor of Moses, was mourning upon Mount Horeb or Carmel. Among all the prophets, only two were priests, and those neither the boldest nor the most distinguished.

I have yet to place before you the soul of Moses, severe, full of zeal, and borne down with anxiety, even to death, in his last glowing and poetical effusion. What his deeds, his

institutions, his descriptions, and his other poems have produced for the voice of poetry, we shall enquire in the sequel ; but in this poem the images that surround you, are the flaming mountain, the fiery and cloudy pillars, which went before Israel, and in them the angel of the countenance of Jehovah.

SONG OF MOSES TO THE ASSEMBLED ISRAELITES BEFORE HIS DEATH.

Give ear, O ye heavens, to my speech,
Hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.*
My doctrine shall drop as the rain,
My words shall distil as the dew,
As rain upon the tender herb,
And as the showers upon the grass ;
For I will publish the name of Jehovah—
Ascribe ye greatness to Jehovah our God.

He is a rock,† his work is perfect,‡
And all his dealings are right ;
A God of truth, without iniquity,
Sincere and righteous is he.
They only are no longer his children,||

* Moses calls heaven and earth to bear witness in the previous chapter, (Deut. xxxi. 28.) as the prophets often did in later times. The whole of this mild introduction to a didactic poem, that closes in a style so ardent, in after times was frequently imitated in the introduction to similar works.

† The image of a rock, so frequent in this piece as almost to lose its figurative character, (v. 15. 30. 31. 37.) was undoubtedly taken from Sinai and the rocks of Arabia, among which Israel had so long wandered. On Mount Sinai the covenant was made, and on the part of God it was enduring as the everlasting rocks.

‡ The Israelites often complained of the way, in which God led them in the desert. Moses vindicates the cause of the Most High, and shows that of the promises, which he had made to them from the time of Abraham, not one word had yet fallen to the ground.

|| This somewhat harsh arrangement of words, is undoubtedly genuine, because a similar one occurs repeatedly, (v. 17. 21.) and it is, as it were, the soul of the piece. God remains their father, with unchanging faithfulness, but they only have forsaken him, and become first through unlikeness, and then of necessity, no longer his children. They have first become ignorant of him, and he has then rejected them.

Their iniquity hath turned them from him,
 A faithless and perverse generation.
 Is this your requital to Jehovah,
 O foolish people and unwise ?
 Is he not thy father, he that hath bought thee ?
 That hath made thee, and established thee ?
 Call to remembrance the ancient days,
 The years from generation to generation,
 Ask thy father, and he will shew thee,
 The aged men, and they will tell it thee,†
 When the Almighty gave the nations their lands,
 When he separated the children of men,
 He limited the bounds of the nations,
 That the numbers of Israel might have room;†
 For the portion of God is his people,
 Jacob, the lot of his inheritance.
 He found him in a desert land,||

* Moses at this early period, has here the expression, which the prophets often use—that God received Israel in Abraham as a child, prepared him as a people for himself, and gave him being as a father. Under Moses he bought him to himself out of Egypt as a bond servant; and has therefore the claims both of a master, and of a father, as Moses here distinctly expresses it. How truly also is the distinction found in the spirit and the events of the different periods.

† In the sequel is introduced that which it is said the fathers shall relate. Moses goes back to the separation of tribes, and the division of countries among them, when the Almighty, in assigning their dwellings to all nations, drew their limits, as it were, narrower, that the line of his inheritance, Canaan, might be left for the twelve tribes. This land becomes hereby, as it were, the mediterranean, the central point of the earth, as every nation of antiquity held their sanctuary to be, of which we shall speak on another occasion.

‡ That is, the numerous Israel; and in proportion to his numbers will be the space required for the twelve tribes. The words have given occasion to too many fables, and yet are very plain.

§ The march of the Israelites through the wilderness. God found them on the shores of the Red Sea, and led them to the hills of Bashan, the fruits and excellencies of which are described. The words, there was no strange God with them, express the fact, that Israel was led out of Egypt, redeemed, and carried onward, under no other guardian God

In a waste and bowling wilderness ;
 He took him in his arms and taught him ;
 He guarded him as the apple of his eye.
 As the eagle covers her nest around,
 And hovers over her young,
 Spreads her wings, takes them thereon,
 And bears them aloft upon her wings ;
 So did Jehovah lead him, himself alone,
 There was no strange God with him.
 He bore him to the mountain heights,
 And fed him with the fruits of the earth ;
 He made him to suck honey from the rock,
 And oil out of the flinty rock,
 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep,
 The fat of lambs, and of the rams of Bashan,
 The fat kidneys of goats, and bread of wheat,*
 And thou didst drink the blood of the grape.
 Then Jeshurun† waxed stout, and rebelled,
 Thou wast too fat, too satiate, too full,
 Thou didst forsake the God, that made thee,
 And lightly esteem the rock of thy salvation.‡
 They moved his jealousy with strange gods,||

than Jehovah. Their idolatry and abominations with Baal-Peor took place only when they had reached the borders of Canaan.

* I have departed here from the interpunction of the Hebrews, because the phrase, fat of the kidneys of wheat, seems to have no good sense, and the more natural sense is obvious. The detail of these fruits and eatables is proof, like every thing else in it, of the unborrowed truth of this poem. After the people had been so long in the desert, these hills must seem an Elysium, and their fruits the food of Paradise.

† This word is a title of fondness given to Israel, in the character of a child, a personification, which runs through most of this piece. The name occurs also in the blessings pronounced by Moses and in Isaiah.

‡ The distinction again between the choice of Israel as a son in Abraham, and his purchased deliverance as a servant under Moses.

|| Here we see the precise, and true conceptions of Moses respecting idolatry, which were the ground of his legislation. Idols were a mere nothing, they were an abomination, they were foreign to Israel. The first reason was philosophical, the second moral, the third national. Their Jehovah was for them the alone true, the holy, the good, the ancient God of their fathers, and the guardian God, to whom at Sinai they had placed themselves under new obligations.

They provoked his anger with abominations,
 They sacrificed to demons, not to God,
 To idols, of whom they had no knowledge,
 To new gods, that were newly invented,*
 Before whom your fathers trembled not;†
 Of Him that begat thee,—the Rock—thou wast forgetful,
 And didst forget the God that formed thee.

This Jehovah saw, and cast away in anger,
 Those who were his sons and daughters.
 He said, "I will turn my face from them,
 I will see to what end they will come.
 For they are a perverse generation,
 Children of a base and faithless sort.

They moved me to jealousy with their no-god,
 They provoked me to anger with their idols;
 I also will move their jealousy with a no-people,
 With a foolish nation I will provoke their anger.‡

For the fire of my wrath is kindled,
 And shall burn even to the deep abyss,
 It shall consume the earth and her fruits,
 And fire the foundations of the mountains.

I will heap up afflictions upon them,
 And my arrows will I send upon them,
 Consumed with hunger, and burned with heat,
 Devoured with bitter destruction,
 I will send upon them the teeth of wild beasts,
 With the poison of serpents from the dust.

* We see how Moses thinks of the God of his people, and of the patriarchs, as an ancient God. Their notices of him, and of the patriarchs, must therefore be ancient also, and anterior to the time of Moses. He did not invent then the religion of the patriarchs, but rather altered it and made the child into a servant.

† The expression is used, not because their fathers trembled with horror before the true God, but because they themselves did before their imaginary gods and demons.

‡ The idiomatick form of expression, children, no-children, God, no-god, nation, no-nation or not-nation, runs through the whole piece, and is entirely in the spirit of the law-giver. The organization, which he formed, was for him the only one; all other nations were to him no nations, not organized states, but uncivilized hordes.

The sword shall be without, and terror within,*
 And shall destroy both the young man and virgin,
 The suckling, and the man of gray hairs.
 I had almost said, I will destroy them,†
 And blot out their name among men;
 Had I not feared the pride of the enemy,
 That their oppressors would mistake it,
 And say, "our own high hand,
 And not Jehovah hath done this."

For they are a nation void of counsel,
 There is no understanding in them.

O! that they were wise, to understand this,
 That they would consider their latter end.
 How is it, that one can chase a thousand,‡
 And two of them put ten thousand to flight?
 Is it not, that their rock hath forsaken them,
 That Jehovah hath given them for a prey?
 Else their rock were not like our rock,
 Our enemies themselves being judges.

Their vine is from the vine of Sodom,
 Their grapes from the fields of Gomorrah,
 Grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter,
 Their juice is the poison of dragons,
 The deadly venom of serpents.

Have I not already my secret counsel,
 Sealed and laid up in my treasures?
 "Vengeance is mine and the day of recompense,
 Their foot is even now ready to slide,
 The day of their calamity is at hand,
 Their destiny is soon coming upon them."

Jehovah is now the judge of his people,||

* Without and within the cities and houses.

† It is plain, that God is here introduced with human feelings of jealousy, speaking against other national gods.

‡ At once the poet places himself in view of the melancholy end of this people, and how exactly, as well as fearfully, was the prophecy fulfilled! And the legislator of the nation must himself utter it, must close his life, already melancholy, with such prophetick anticipations! a fate, which only a rock like Moses could have sustained.

|| Those translations, which take these lines in a favourable sense, have the context plainly against them. The curse proceeds and contin-

It repents him, that they are his children,
 He seeth, that their power is departed,
 That nothing is left to them more.
 He asks them, where are now their gods,
 The guardian God, in whom they trusted ?
 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices,
 And drank the wine of their drink-offerings ?
 Let them now rise up and help you,
 Let them now be your protection.

See now, that I, even I am he,
 And there are no Gods with me.
 I am he, that killeth and maketh alive,
 I am he, that woundeth and healeth,
 And none can deliver out of my hand.

For I lift up my hand to heaven,
 And say, I am, the living one
 From eternity to eternity.
 If I whet my glittering sword,
 And my hand take hold on judgment,
 I will render vengeance to mine enemies,
 And will reward them that hate me.*
 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
 My sword shall satiate itself with flesh,
 The blood of the slain, and of the captives,
 With the head of the chief of my enemy.
 Rejoice, ye Gentiles, now his people,
 He will avenge the blood of his servants,
 And render vengeance to his enemies,
 And purify his land and people.†

ues to the end of the poem. The blessing first begins in the next chapter. It is indeed a fearful consideration, that God must thus forget the father in the judge, and yet feel that they are his children.

* I can understand these words only as still referring to the Jewish nation, once his children, now his open enemies, on whom he avenges himself. He rejects them, and takes the Gentiles for his people.

† The last line is obscure to my mind, because the connecting particle in the Hebrew is wanting before the word people. It would seem as if it were wished to read as a blessing, what was meant as a curse, though the blessing properly follows in a separate chapter. The Gentiles are here summoned, as now the people of God, to witness the judgment of

God upon Israel. He avenges the blood of his servants upon this people, and purifies the land from sin. (I will not decide, whether in relation to the last word we should read *and* or *from* his people. The blessing which follows, as well as that of Jacob, is translated in another work, "Letters on the study of Theology," and need not be repeated here.) This chapter ends like the last of the prophets. The nation is cast forth and banished from the land.

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